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WASHTENAW JEWISH NEWS

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Nourishing our local life with food and flowers

Emily Eisbruch, special to the Washtenaw Jewish News

Not long ago, Michigan was home to over a hundred farms owned and worked by Jewish farmers. Fruit, celery, poultry, and vacation rentals were among the Jewish farmers' specialties. Carole Caplan, founder and owner of The Farm on Jennings, just north of Ann Arbor, is among a handful of 21st century Michigan Jewish farmers carrying forward the tradition.

Caplan describes The Farm on Jennings as "a woman-powered farm providing a diverse selection of Certified Naturally Grown produce and flowers." I chatted with her about farming, sustainability, and the connections between farming, spirituality, and Judaism.

Emily: Carole, how did you get started in farming, and how has The Farm on Jennings grown and developed?

Carole: I bought this wonderful piece of land in 2013 out of my concerns around climate change. I felt that if I could leave my children anything, a piece of land on which they could grow food would be a worthwhile legacy. I began implementing permaculture principles (which offer a regenerative and interrelated focus on land stewardship), and somehow ended up where I am today — growing herbs and seasonal vegetables for our local food system and selling cut flowers to individuals and Southeast Michigan florists. The desire of each sale is to help nourish your local life.

Emily: In what ways does spirituality, and specifically, Judaism, fit into your farming?

Carole: Seasonally witnessing the miracle of seeds sprouting and food coming to harvest despite the variables of pests, disease, and unpredictable weather is certainly a spiritual experience for me. It is so grounding and healing to have your hands in the earth! Working in the field, I am regularly reminded of Judaism's deep connection to agriculture — gratitude overwhelms me each time the first of the produce ripens and is accompanied by a deep urge to offer up the first fruits in blessing. I also have a new understanding of the awe that comes from concern over weather, and of things truly outside of our control. Importantly, being surrounded by the abundance at harvest time compels me to remember those who have limited access to healthy food and what it might mean to leave open the corners of the fields, as demanded

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Jewish astronaut Jessica Meir wants to be the first woman on the moon

Hadas Ragolsky Chrissy, originally from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Since astronaut Jessica Meir returned to Earth in April from the International Space Station, she — like all of us — has spent a lot of time indoors and cooped up.

While many of us have spent our confinement dreaming of future trips, Meir is working on her own travel plans to a singular destination: She wants to walk on the moon.

It's not just a pipe dream.

Meir, the fourth Jewish woman (and 15th Jew overall) to travel to space, made the Guinness Book of World Records when she and fellow astronaut Christina Koch conducted the first all-female spacewalk — lasting 7 hours, 17 minutes — on Oct. 18, 2019. Not long afterward, the pair did it again.

Named as one of Time magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2020, Meir has an interesting Jewish story.

She grew up in Caribou, Maine, the daughter of a Swedish mother and an Iraqi-born father who immigrated to Israel as a child, fought in the Israeli War of Independence and later moved to Sweden before ending up in the United States. Meir, the youngest of five, also holds Swedish citizenship.

Jessica Meir prepares to be submerged in NASA's 6.2 million gallon Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory for spacewalk training. PHOTO CAPTION: NASA/JOSH VALCARCEL

Meir, 43, was raised in a Jewish home, regularly attended synagogue as a child and feels very connected to Israel. She last visited there four years ago, and she took with her to the space station a postcard from Yad Vashem with a painting by a Holocaust survivor, a medal coined in memory of the late Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon and the Israeli flag.

"My father grew up in Israel, and most of my relatives from my father's side still live in Israel," Meir said. "I hope I can visit Israel soon; it is a very important part of my life."

We sat down recently with Meir for a Zoom interview to talk about her work in space, what it's like to be a role model for girls and women the world over, and her Jewish connections. Meir talked with us from the NASA Space Center in Houston while wearing her iconic flight suit.

"There are some key moments in becoming an astronaut, one of which is when you first wear your blue flight suit," Meir said. "This is such an iconic image, which all throughout my childhood I associated the suit with my dream of becoming an astronaut. So, wearing this suit when I'm being interviewed here, or giving a lecture to children – I suddenly realize: 'Wow, this is me now, I'm the person on the other side, I'm the role model.' And I take it very seriously.

"It is a very important part of our role as

Continued on page 2

From the Editor January 2021

I got a laugh from the recent quip, "1-20-21: the world's most awaited palindrome." But in all seriousness, I feel a breathless desire for January 2021 to mark a turned leaf. At the end of this month, on the 28th, we celebrate Tu b'Shvat, the New Year of the Trees, when as the days lengthen, if we put an ear close enough to feel the bark, we will hear the tree's roots looking for water to draw up.

With this month, I am introducing a new section to the WJN, "Do'ikayt: Washtenaw," employing the Yiddish concept word meaning "Here-ness." This section will be devoted to local news, politics, and issues of interest to Jews in Washtenaw County, not because we are Jews, but because we live here. This month I'm kicking off the new section with a report from the Michigan League for Public Policy, a state-level organization that addresses poverty and analyzes state and local budgets and policies through a lens of racial equity. The second article is from Chalkbeat, a non-profit news agency focusing on education news.

Clare Kinberg

This is the WJN's first ever January issue. In the past, a good segment of our readers were elsewhere in January. This year, we are, by-and-large, at home. I hope these news of the community will keep you connected to Jews, locally and around the world. Stay safe, mask up, and get in line to vaccinate! ■

Woman on the Moon, *Continued from page 1*

astronauts, to be in touch with the public, to communicate with people and to educate them. This is one of NASA's key mission statements. So even though it's still a little hard to believe that I'm the one who inspires others to be like me, I think it's my duty to continue making that connection and inspire the next generation of researchers."

But Meir doesn't take herself too seriously.

My two daughters joined me for the interview, and when my 7-year-old, Tuti, asked if there were any other creatures in space that were "human-like," Meir answered enthusiastically.

"I was at the space station with a few other crew members, with American, Russian and Italian astronauts. They certainly looked like humans," she said. "Other than the astronauts and cosmonauts who were with me at the space station, we saw no other life forms or anything that looked like humans."

She added, "I definitely believe that there are some forms of life in outer space – maybe there were in the past, and maybe they are there right now, or will be in the future. Statistically, if we look at the sheer size of space and the dimensions of space and time, it is very unlikely that we are the only planet where any kind of life has evolved."

Later, when my 9-year-old, Lihi, wanted to know what it felt like to be in space, Meir talked about how fun it was.

"Ever since I was a child, even younger than you, I have always said I want to be an astronaut. Even the simple act of floating – when you're in a state of constant weightlessness and floating around – it's just so much fun," she said.

"Everything is more fun when you're floating, whether you just finished eating or fixing something, or doing an experiment, you can just take a moment and float up and down or do some cartwheels in midair, or float around like Superman inside the space station. I think it allows us to feel like children again, to express this cheerfulness which sometimes we lose when we grow up and become adults."

Aside from the Israeli items Meir took with her to space, she also brought some American Jewish totems with her, including a pair of socks with menorahs (for Hanukkah). In an ode to Jewish grandmothers everywhere, she also baked some cookies while in space, much to the delight of her 250,000 Instagram followers.

In first grade, when Meir was asked to draw what she'd like to be when she grew up, Meir drew an astronaut standing on the moon. At age 13 she enrolled in a NASA summer camp, and at her college graduation her parents held a sign that read 'Congratulations, space girl!"

But though her path was supposed to lead her straight to aeronautics and space studies, Meir first earned a doctorate in marine biology. Her dissertation focused on the diving physiology of emperor penguins and northern elephant seals, including research expeditions in Antarctica and Northern California.

She described how that experience connects to her space work.

"The topics I was drawn to, the physiology of animals in extreme environments, required work in isolated places such as Antarctica, and were driven by curiosity and the need to explore," Meir said. "In the end, even though it didn't seem like the traditional route to becoming an astronaut because I did what I loved I excelled and I was happy. I felt satisfied and made it my career, and it led me to fulfill another dream – reaching outer space."

Prior to joining NASA, she participated in a joint mission of the space agency and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. This time she and her friends were themselves the subject of an experiment: As part of their mission, she and a number of other crew members spent six days underwater in a state of saturation diving.

Meir also spent a lot of time researching the physiology of animals in extreme environments, such as penguins, seals and birds that live at high altitudes.

"At that point I was the scientist and researcher – and the animals were the subjects of my research. Now I am the 'animal' being experimented on," Meir said. "I think it's a natural role we play as astronauts.

"On my mission, the studies in which I was the subject examined how space flight and a micro-gravity environment affect the human body. Understanding these things will allow us to monitor astronauts' health and will be even more relevant to missions that require a longer stay in space — for example, when we return to the moon and eventually travel to Mars."

Meir says that being Jewish is an important part of her identity. While in space in March, she tweeted a photo of Tel Aviv that she took from space. Earlier in her mission, Meir tweeted a Hanukkah greeting that included a photo of her menorah socks with Earth seen through a window in the background.

This article is part of a joint project of Onlife, the Gesher Leadership Institute and JTA, featuring some of the most influential Jewish women from around the world. ■

Shani Tsur contributed to this article.

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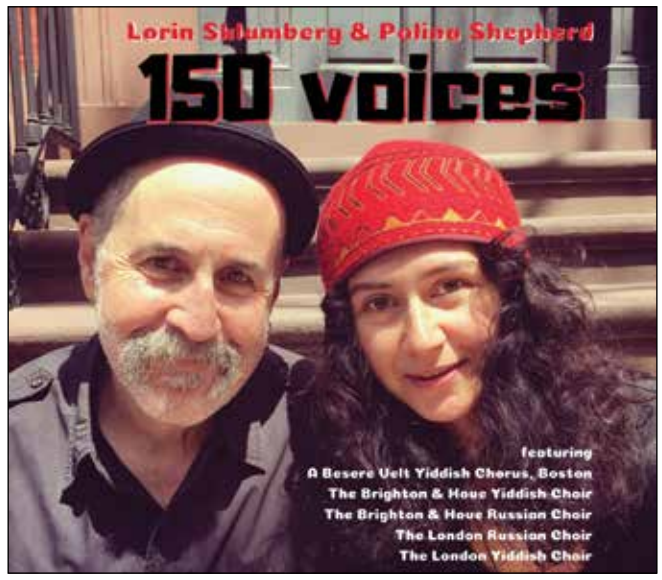
Zoom lider, singing through COVID with Polina Shepherd

By Beth Dwoskin

All around the world, choirs have gone silent. In the age of COVID, choral singing is muted, with no revival in sight. The spraying aerosols that singing generates are the nightmare of public health experts.

Compounding the problem is the fact that, unlike so many other interpersonal endeavors, choral singing is not possible on Zoom. The time delay between vocal production and audio reception means that any attempt to coordinate voices ends in cacophony. Jewish singers have nevertheless taken to Zoom to perform, to lecture, and to teach, and choral leaders are gamely sending out scores and mp3s for their singers to learn and record separate tracks, which are then synced into heartfelt amateur recordings. But recording in isolation cannot match the sensation of singing in chorus in real time.



Thankfully, singer and composer Polina Shepherd has plunged into this COVID-induced musical desert with a whirlwind of choral activity. Her busy website is bursting with initiatives, including weekly "Sing with me!" sessions on Zoom. Best of all, through the Worker's Circle, she has formed a Zoom choir of about 15 singers, among which I am blessed to be a member.

Living and breathing choral music as she does, Polina is well aware of the historic role of choirs in Jewish music. Most people are familiar with synagogue choirs, which have been part of Ashkenazic services for more than 150 years. But secular choirs too have a significant place in modern Jewish cultural history. In Europe, Bundists sang in streets and fields, in barns and on the open road, without benefit of sound systems or concert hall acoustics. Yiddish song enthusiasts are still singing the rousing Bund anthem, "Di Shvue" — the oath — written by Sh. Ansky.

In North America, secular choirs made activism and progressive politics the basis for their musical programs, and they sang in Yiddish, from earliest times to the present. The Toronto Jewish Folk Choir achieved immortality when it shared the stage with Paul Robeson, who in 1949 told its members, "This isn't just a choir. We all know that."

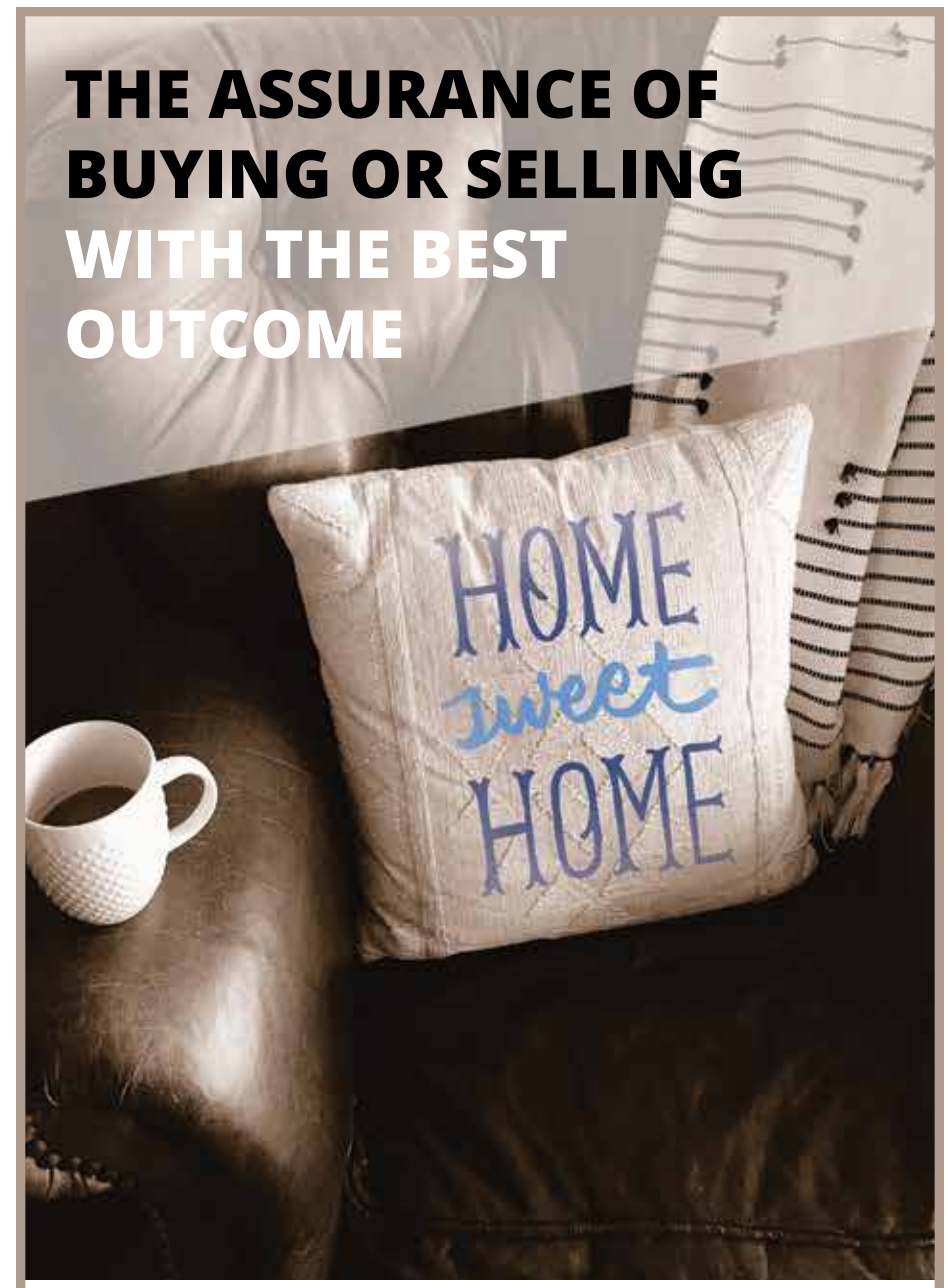
In America, the Workers' Circle, formerly, the Workmen's Circle, has been sponsoring choirs from its very beginnings. Even as Yiddish-speaking audiences have shrunk, the Arbeter Ring's commitment to the language, the music, and the progressive stance remains steadfast. Polina lives the spirit of this choral tradition in Europe, where, pre-pandemic, she directed Russian and Yiddish choirs in London and in Brighton.

In 2019, Polina produced a CD, *150 Voices*, based on her urge to "explore the connection between the steppes and the shtetl." Working in duet with Lorin Sklamberg of the Klezmatics, she arranged 18 songs, with 12 of them backed up by her choirs as well as by the choir of the Workers' Circle in Boston. These choirs sing with a passion and intensity that no professional choir can match, and they provide back-up, fill, counterpoint, and harmony through inspired arrangements that highlight these two singers, possibly the finest two singers in Yiddish in our day, both of whom are also the expert accompanists on piano and accordion.

The collection ranges from traditional Yiddish folk tunes to composed art songs, to Russian songs, and to a translation into Yiddish of "I am Willing," the original by American folksinger Holly Near. The spare and musically savvy arrangements allow the beauty of the songs and the performances to shine through. Most of these pieces will be unfamiliar to all but the most dedicated students of Yiddish song, and they could not have a better introduction to the listening public than they will have through this album. The concept here is at once simple and profound, and so resonant in our time — the power and spirit of voices lifted together.

Polina Skovoroda-Shepherd was born in Siberia and grew up in Tatarstan, surrounded by traditional Russian, Islamic, and Yiddish music. This background gave her an invaluable exposure to a cross-section of eastern musical modes in her childhood. She had thorough formal training in classical piano and voice before moving to England in 2003. She has appeared in all the major Jewish music festivals, and she is deeply involved in the world of traditional Russian music. She often performs with her husband, klezmer clarinetist Merlin Shepherd.

I am confounded by the dissonance of this pandemic curse bringing me across the ocean through my computer to find Polina, whose approach to Yiddish music is a revelation for me. It's the highlight of my week when my screen fills with her smiling face and mane of black hair as she graces our group with her effortless virtuosity and intuitive musicality. *150 Voices* has the choir music that Jewish music lovers need as we mark our first year of plague. Find it at polinashepherd.co.uk/projects/150-voices. ■



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Mandatory sentencing, driver's license suspension reforms pass nearly unanimously

Michigan League for Public Policy Press Release

The Michigan Senate passed two important criminal justice reform packages in early December to eliminate mandatory sentencing for a variety of offenses (House Bills 5844 and 5854–5857) and rein in and reduce driver's license suspensions for offenses not related to dangerous driving (House Bills 5846–5852).

"For too long, driver's license suspensions have been overused as a punishment for a variety of offenses not directly tied to being a danger on the road, and with it, the practice has actually made poverty the 'offense' most often being punished," says Alex Rossman, external affairs director for the Michigan League for Public Policy. "Today's action is another step toward smart justice that reins in overly severe and ineffective punishments, and another much-needed step toward improving racial equity and economic stability for Michigan residents and their families."

As the Michigan League for Public Policy's testimony on these bills noted, driving without a valid license (including a suspended license) is the third-most-common reason for jail admission in Michigan. By strictly penalizing drivers for reasons unrelated to safe driving or stemming from unpaid traffic tickets, Michigan law shuts out Michiganders from financial stability and security, criminalizing poverty instead.

A League fact sheet released in September noted that in 2010, nearly 400,000 licenses were suspended for failure to appear or nonpayment — 80% of all license suspensions that year — and only 5% of all suspensions were related to dangerous driving. This number has not reduced substantially over the last decade, with Michigan issuing approximately 360,000 driver's license suspensions each year because drivers failed to appear in court or pay legal fines and fees.

The League's analysis on driver's license suspensions also looked at dramatically different experiences and punishments by race. Bias in traffic stops contributes to Black drivers being more likely than white drivers to serve jail time for driving without a valid license. Driver's license suspension reform will not address the racial disparities we see in Michigan's traffic stops, but it will allow hundreds of thousands of drivers to stay on the roads and continue to work by halting a cycle that stems from unpaid tickets and the debt that can quickly accrue.

On the criminal justice front, the League also supported the Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration and its many positive policy recommendations, including the mandatory sentencing reforms passed by the Senate today.

"We simply believe that sentences should fit the nature and severity of the offense, and look at the best ways to achieve resolution, reform, and reparation," Rossman says. "The many mandatory minimum jail sentences currently on Michigan's books do the opposite of that, sending more Michigan residents to jail for mostly minor incidents. These reforms give judges and prosecutors more flexibility to better match the sentence to the offense. But more importantly, these changes will keep more Michigan residents out of jail and working and supporting their families, better serving our people, our communities, our businesses, and our justice system." ■

Writing matters with YpsiWrites

Special to the WJN

Writing can be a challenge for many of us — from getting words on a page to organizing what we have to say to making sure our writing is effective. Because of this, Eastern Michigan University's Office of Campus and Community Writing (C^2W) has extended writing support to the community through YpsiWrites, a new community writing center. A partnership between C^2W, 826michigan, and the Ypsilanti District Library, YpsiWrites offers writing consultations, workshops, and resources that support writing across the Ypsilanti community.

Anyone in Washtenaw County is welcome to use the free support and services of YpsiWrites. Upcoming virtual workshops open to the public include:

Resume Writing on Thursday, January 21, 2021, at 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m

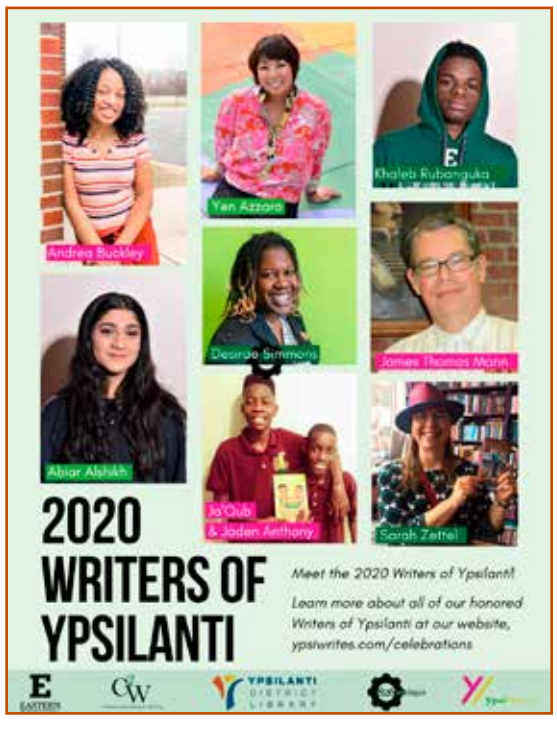
Getting That Song Out of Your Head and Onto Paper with Ypsilanti singer-songwriter Pat Grimes on Saturday, January 23, 2021, at 4 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.

Opening Our Hearts Through Writing — Celebrating African American Women Poets with EMU professor of Africology Toni Pressley-Sanon on Saturday, February 13, 2021, at 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

You can register for any of these workshops at YpsiWrites.com.

YpsiWrites is also looking for volunteers to serve as writing tutors or workshop leaders, or to serve on teams to develop writing resources.

To keep up with YpsiWrites, visit emich.edu/ccw/ypsi-writes, and follow @YpsiWrites on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook ■



Lessons learned from Detroit district Muslim students' fight to recognize the Eid al-Fitr holiday

Eleanore Catolico, originally published in Chalkbeat Detroit

Mohammad Muntakim spent most of his high school career fighting for the recognition of Eid al-Fitr so Muslim students could spend time with their families during a sacred holiday.

He and other Muslim students rallied dozens of community members, organized virtual town halls, and collected thousands of signatures to garner support for it.

"These days are focused on yourself, your community, and your family," said Muntakim, a senior and president of the Cass Technical High School Muslim Students Association, which has about 200 members. "Having school on these days takes that away from you."

Eid al-Fitr is a Muslim holiday commemorating the end of Ramadan, a month of communal fasting and prayer. Muslims come together to celebrate the end of fasting, sharing in meals, participating in community events and charitable giving.

The push to get Eid on the Detroit district calendar took two years. Efforts paid off last month when the district and the Detroit Federation of Teachers agreed to observe Eid al-Fitr for three days, from May 2-4 during the 2021-22 academic school year. It will be the first time the state's largest school district will honor the holiday, which is already observed in Dearborn Public Schools and other schools and districts with large Muslim student populations.

Students spent the early days of the campaign talking with district leaders, and conducting widespread community outreach at mosques and other venues. The students said support from Muslim and non-Muslim students, parents, and teachers also made a difference. In addition, educating non-Muslims on the significance of the holiday was crucial in building a coalition of support.

"It was the advocacy of students that first put the issue on my radar to address," said superintendent Nikolai Vitti.

DFT president Terrence Martin said the union agreement benefits both Muslim students and teachers.

"This is really about being a progressive school district," he said.

The students, some who will be graduates by the time the district honors the holiday, said they hope their efforts will show other students that they can change policy at their schools.

A small group of Cass Tech Muslim students led by Muntakim launched the DPSCDOff4Eid campaign in 2018. Senior Syeda Ara joined because she wanted to foster more cultural competency and awareness amongst teachers.

Ara recalled that during her freshman year, she told a teacher she wouldn't be in school to take her finals because they conflicted with Eid. Ara's teacher didn't understand why the holiday was important to her.

"If she was more aware of the holiday and its significance, she would have been more accepting of me making up for my finals," she said. "Because of her unawareness, I was shocked."

That lack of understanding among school staff was also a shock for student Hemyar Al-Jamali, a Cass Tech junior who previously attended charter schools with large Muslim student populations.

"We have a little bit less of a presence," he said, referring to the smaller number of Muslim students at his school compared with schools he previously attended. Al-Jamali said he would sometimes take more than one day off leading up to the celebration of Eid to help his family and friends prepare. He found that juggling school and his faith obligations was difficult.

It took education advocacy group 482Forward to help the students develop a strategy, thanks to a recommendation from community organizer America Ali Yahya.

"It turned out the students were struggling more than I imagined, in regards to holidays and getting their voices heard," Yahya said.

Tapping local expertise helped the students reach out to non-Muslims.

"We have to celebrate the cultures that aren't just dominant. This is a perfect example of how our community of parents and students across the city are going to continue to fight to make sure our schools are culturally competent," 482Forward organizing director Molly Sweeney said.

Last year, the Detroit district had planned to observe Eid during the 2019-20 school year by creating a training day for teachers.

The union opposed the calendar approval process and argued that it was designed to prioritize standardized testing. The district then revoked the proposed calendar, which included Eid's observance. The district approved the 2020-21 school calendar in April without the observance of Eid, despite arguments from Muntakim and Al-Jamali to postpone the vote.

The students organized a virtual town hall convened in May, which included Martin, state lawmaker Abdullah Hammoud, public health expert Dr. Abdul El-Sayed, U.S. Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, local educators, and faith leaders.

With the help of organizers, students launched a social media video campaign that featured students, teachers, parents, and advocates pledging their support. That help came at the right time, as Muntakim was starting to become frustrated but kept the campaign's momentum going for the change.

"At first, I think I was doing a lot of this out of raw passion. And when things went south, I was like, 'You know what, I gotta quit this, maybe focus on my studies.'"

But now Muntakim and other students hope their efforts will lead to more cultural competency in schools.

"It's one thing to say you accept equality, and you're diverse, and all those good things. But it's another thing to actually put your words into action, and actually accept people for their differences and make accommodations for them," Muntakim said.

This story was originally published by Chalkbeat, a nonprofit news organization covering public education. Learn more at Chalkbeat.org ■

Rockin' raises real funds

Lauren Grossman, special of the WJN

Radio station WQXL known as "Ann Arbor's 107one," Kroger, and Food Gatherers successfully raised money for more than 49,000 emergency food boxes for Washtenaw County during the Rockin' for the Hungry fund drive.

During the five-day virtual fund drive, Food Gatherers received enough donations from community members to help provide 49,083 emergency food boxes for food-insecure residents in Washtenaw County.

"During Rockin' for the Hungry: COVID-19 edition, we wanted to adjust our goal to reflect the needs of our community amid the pandemic," says Eileen Spring, president and CEO of Food Gatherers. "The emergency food boxes will be distributed by our partner pantries throughout Washtenaw County, and each box provides a week's worth of meals for one person."

Since March, Food Gatherers' network of partner agencies has experienced a 30%–300% increase in visitors, about 40% of whom had never visited a pantry before. Feeding America, the national network of food banks, projects that by the end of 2020, the number of individuals facing food insecurity in Washtenaw County could rise by more than 37% overall, and for children specifically, the food insecurity rate could rise by 101%. During Rockin', the Washtenaw community came together to show that they care about helping their neighbors and that they can fight hunger in a big way.

Thousands of donors, including individuals, students, businesses, and nonprofits stepped up to express their support as 107one DJs issued a call to action to the community and reported Rockin' progress via a live broadcast and interviews posted on the radio's Facebook live page. Generous donations from the Harold and Kay Peplau Family Fund and the estate of Irene Fast, as well as other community sponsors, matched Rockin' donations dollar for dollar. In an impressive show of determination, Community High School students raised more than $82,000 — their largest ever gift to Rockin' — which was then matched 1:1!

Food Gatherers is truly grateful for every donor who took action to fight hunger where they live. Food insecurity can only be solved by a community that cares and works together, and Washtenaw County proved that it does both. ■

Holly Huffnagle 'After Auschwitz: Antisemitism in America'

Martin B. Shichtman, special to the WJN

On Tuesday, January 26, the eve of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies will host Holly Huffnagle, U.S. Director for Combating Antisemitism for the American Jewish Committee to address pertinent questions about antisemitism in America. The virtual lecture will be at 7 p.m.

More than 75 years after Auschwitz, antisemitism is again on the rise in Europe. It is also increasing here at home — in America. After recent killings in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Poway, California; Jersey City, New Jersey; and Monsey, New York, as well as continuous attacks on Jews in Brooklyn, the American Jewish community has reason for concern. Eighty-eight percent of American Jews say antisemitism is a problem in the United States today, with 82% agreeing that antisemitism has increased over the past five years. The FBI's annual Hate Crime Statistics for 2019 disclose that 60.2% of anti-religious hate crimes were against Jews, who make up less than 2% of the American population. As Rabbi Asher Lopatin, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council/AJC of Detroit (JCRC/AJC), has noted, "It is tragic that at a time when we all need to come together, work together, and depend on each other, antisemitism is on the rise. Everyone is affected by hate and antisemitism — whatever your religion or community — and we must all be partners in fighting such hatred and prejudice in order to strengthen our society and fight the challenges we face together."

One obstacle to fighting antisemitism is that nearly half (46%) of American adults do not know what the term "antisemitism" means — or say they have never heard the word. How do we push back against antisemitism and other forms of hate and intolerance when the broader society is ignorant? Why is combating antisemitism also a problem for non-Jews? And how do we work together to lower levels of antisemitism in America?

In her role at AJC, Huffnagle spearheads the global organization's response to antisemitism in the United States and its efforts to better protect the Jewish community.

Before coming to AJC, Huffnagle served as policy advisor to the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism at the U.S. Department of State and as a researcher in the Mandel Center of Advanced Holocaust Studies at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Most recently, she was scholar-in-residence at Oxford University with the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy.

This presentation is co-sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Community Relations Council/AJC, Hillel at Eastern Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University Campus Life, and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. The Center for Jewish Studies would also like to offer a special thank you to Art and Mary Schuman.

There is no cost to attend this program. However, registration is required at tinyurl.com/emulecture6.

If you have any questions, please contact Marty Shichtman at jewish.studies@emich.edu. ■

Connecting across generations

Stephanie Glass, special to the WJN

Join the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor's Jewish Young Professionals and Jewish Community Relations Committee on Thursday, January 14, for an interactive and educational event exploring the Jewish imperative to act. Putting Our Values into Action: An Intergenerational Conversation will connect the multiple generations making up Jewish Ann Arbor, allowing participants to share and learn from one another. Through the magic of Zoom, participants from different generations will be broken out into different rooms and given a piece of Jewish text to study and discuss.

Text study is a favorite activity of Federation's Jewish Young Professionals group, and members of JYP will help lead the group discussions. Sheira Cohen, a JYP board member, says, "As a younger member of this community, I recognize there are a lot of life experiences that I don't have yet, and there is much to learn from talking with older members of the community. Likewise, there is much I can share with them. Through this event, we are aiming to bring our various views and experiences together by exploring Jewish text and discussing the ways Jewish values influence our actions."

In addition to the text study, Ann Arbor native Rebecca Epstein will kick off the event by sharing how Judaism inspires her social activism, specifically around immigration rights. In 2018, Rebecca traveled as part of an Ann Arbor delegation led by Rabbi Josh Whinston of Temple Beth Emeth to El Paso, Texas, to protest the U.S. government's treatment of asylum seekers. In addition to this work, Rebecca is also a founding member of the Bend the Arc, Ann Arbor Moral Minyan. "I saw Rebecca speak about her experience traveling to El Paso at Limmud Michigan 2019 and her story stayed with me," says Joelle Abramowitz, JYP board president and Federation board member. "When we started planning this event and discussing what we wanted to get out of it, which was highlighting the importance Judaism places upon action, I knew Rebecca would be the perfect speaker to illustrate the power individuals can have in making a difference."

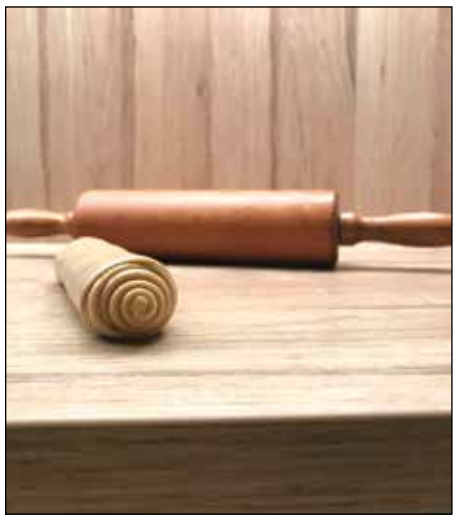
This event is free and open to the public. To register, please visit jewishannarbor.org. ■

How homemade jachnun is giving a lifeline to European Jews in a second COVID wave

Cnaan Liphshiz, originally written for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

After Gal Graber and Tal Goldman had a disappointing experience with a store-bought jachnun, the two Israelis living in Amsterdam set out to make the slow-cooked Yemenite bread on their own.

"As with many Israelis, jachnun is connected in our minds with Saturday mornings, with quality time," Graber told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "But the frozen ones for sale here are not great. So we decided to make our own."



Jachnun needs to be baked in the oven for about 12 hours. PHOTO CAPTION OF: GAL GARBER

It turned out to be a prescient undertaking. Earlier this year, the restaurant where Graber was working — & moshik, which had two Michelin stars thanks to its Israeli chef Moshik Roth — shut down during the Netherlands' first coronavirus lockdown. Like restaurant workers around the world, Graber and his French girlfriend, Mathilde Lair, who was head pastry chef at & moshik's, both lost their jobs.

Now, Graber, Goldman and Lair spend their days baking and delivering the buttery rolled bread that is a standby of Yemenite families' Shabbat lunch tables, and delivering it by scooter throughout Amsterdam.

Neither partner is Yemenite. But what they lack in cultural authenticity they make up for their experience as chefs and desire to make neatly folded rolls that they say are aesthetically superior to coarser cakes and, of course, tastier than the frozen jachnun available in Amsterdam's kosher supermarkets.

"How many jachnuns do you know, in Europe or anywhere, that are made by chefs from a 2-star Michelin restaurant?" Garber said.

There aren't many — but thanks to other enterprising Israelis, Europeans across the continent are getting an introduction to jachnun during the pandemic. Across the globe, home bakers have found themselves suddenly able to compete with restaurants that are now closed to diners. From London to Munich, jachnun businesses have popped up to capitalize on a dish that's exotic, comforting and — perhaps most significantly for the moment — takeout-friendly.

Unlike hummus, which Israelis have had a big role in injecting into the increasingly vegetarian culinary mainstream of Europe and North America, jachnun can stay for days in the fridge without going bad. And unlike falafel, another food that Israelis have had a key role in mainstreaming, it does not become soggy if it is not consumed right away.

Cooked for many hours and typically served with hard-boiled eggs, jachnun comes with a crushed tomato and zhug, a coriander pesto that's so spicy that even Israelis tend to apply it sparingly.

Served with crushed tomato and zhug, a spicy corriander pesto, jachnun is a weekend delicacy for Yemenite Jews. PHOTO CAPTION OF: GAL GARBER

In London, Zak and Yifat Braham are selling mostly to Israelis for whom, Yifat said, "jachnun is part of a tradition, a slice of home. … I think what I'm actually selling are memories, not food."

Yifat learned to make jachnun in her native Karmiel, a city in Israel's north, from her mother and aunt, who have Yemenite roots. She was recovering from major surgery that prevented her from working in her job as a teacher when the pandemic began, so when her husband's income as a cab driver evaporated almost overnight, the family feared a crisis.

"We were heading toward a fall, we couldn't afford to pay the bills," she said. The pair began producing jachnun in their home and delivering it to customers throughout London.

Through the Israeli customers, "others are also getting to know the food," said Yifat, who each week prepares dozens and sometimes hundreds of rolls. "Italians tend to like it for some reason."

Demand is so high that Zak's cab isn't enough to make the rounds anymore. The Brahams had to hire a second delivery man.

"It's not very lucrative, but it's generating an income. It's saved us," Yifat Braham said. "We were lost before we got into jachnun."

The Brahams have competition in Jonathan Gan, a 42-year-old high-tech innovator who immigrated from Israel to the United Kingdom in 2014. He fell back on jachnun last spring, when the country went into a lockdown that spelled disaster for his marketing software at a time when business owners were cutting costs just to stay afloat.

"I reached for grandmother Yonah's jachnun recipes and granddad Zion's zhug recipes and started rolling," Gan said in an article about his coronavirus transformation for Alondon, a Hebrew-language magazine.

Gal Garber and Mathilde Lair prepare jachnun in their apartment in Amsterdam, Nov. 20, 2020. PHOTO CAPTION:MATHILDE LAIR

Gan has applied his startup skillset to his new business, Jachnun Stories.

"There's a fundamental difference between making 10 portions to making 100, and it's not only about multiplying materials by a factor of 10," he told Alondon. As demand rose, "I was racing to catch up with it, learning as I went along how to make bulk while setting up a chain of supply, optimizing preparation, establishing a digital presence" and other aspects.

His kitchen in London looks like a physics classroom. "The walls are full of charts, formulas and calculations, flow charts and work protocols," he said. His business owes as much to his Yemenite grandparents as it does to his Ashkenazi grandmother who put him through his studies to become an engineer, he added.

Ya'arit Stark, a stay-at home mom of two, began selling jachnun earlier this year in her apartment near Munich, where only a few hundred Israelis live.

Her husband, Eran, who works in the tech sector, delivers the dishes across the Munich region by public transportation, she told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in a video interview that she gave while preparing a batch.

Repeating the process that her 95-year-old grandmother, whose name is also Yonah, taught her, she sprays the working surface with fat and stretches the dough until it's the size of an average oven tray. She stops stretching when holes start to form in the nearly transparent sheet.

"You need those holes, they'll provide some airiness," she said as she quickly folded the sheet inward over itself and placed the wrap in a Wonder Pot, an device possibly invented in Israel that is essentially a ring-shaped receptacle made of aluminium that's especially useful for slow cooking. She fills the pot with jachnuns, spraying each unit with oil to keep them from sticking to one another.

With fewer Israelis to buy jachnun, the Starks have had to make inroads with the other locals, whom she says "like Middle Eastern food but have a pretty limited selection of it, mostly made up shawarma."

A taste for novelty was what brought Max Breinbauer, a 26-year-old law student, to jachnun, which he had heard about during his Hebrew-language course. "I wanted something new and it was definitely that. Satisfying, spicy and very simple," said Breinbauer, who is not Jewish and one of the Starks' regulars.

While the future for pandemic pop-ups is uncertain, Gan, in London, said business is going well for now.

"Turns out you can invent an innovative technology, raise millions, start a firm and international operation from scratch, employ dozens of employees, win international competitions, and then hit the jackpot with some flour and water," Gan wrote on Facebook. "We're making lemonade out of corona." ■

Food blogs and me

Lonnie Sussman, special to the WJN

Wow! It feels great to write this column with the date of January 2021! A year ago, we thought that 2020 was such a cool date, but, like some blind dates in our pasts, it turned out to be not as great as originally touted.

There was one aspect of last year that was pretty good — the amount of cooking many of us did. I've seen the pictures on Instagram and Facebook. Some of you are very impressive with your baking. First it was sourdough breads, then other breads, and let's not forget the cakes and cookies. Teenagers and younger children started experimenting with recipes and created beautiful cakes and dinners. Kudos to all of them.

There were many opportunities to watch Zoom presentations from amazing chefs and to learn more about food traditions. I particularly loved the Great Jewish Food presentations, the YIVO series on Ashkenazi cooking, and the discussions with Joan Nathan and Claudia Roden.

I've also discovered many new food blogs, especially Kosher food blogs. They're not really new — many of them have been around for five or more years — but they're newish to me. I've already checked out more than 55 of them, and I'm not even including the Facebook group for Sephardi cooking. Seriously, checking out food writing could become a full-time job.

I find it interesting that many of the blogs have the same recipes. Challah is made from seven ingredients— yeast, water, eggs, salt, sugar, oil, and flour — but there are recipes for challah with various seeds and fruits, and even one with spinach and cheese. I'm old school about my challah, but go ahead and google the recipe for spinach and cheese.

One of the most popular sites is Jamie Geller's. She writes a weekly blog that I get via email. It comes with a menu for a complete meal and a video. Some of the blogs are too meat-oriented for me, so I've been checking out the vegetarian and vegan sites as well. Love and Lemons is my current favorite, but 101 Cookbooks is also a favorite.

I also enjoy looking up recipes for the two ingredients I find in the refrigerator or on the counter and finding a million other blogs that aren't necessarily Jewish or vegetarian, but can help me make kosher dishes. For example, I had some spinach and eggplants and found Indian recipes that were easy and tasty, and I didn't need to get anything special from the store. The Spruce Eats kept showing up when I put in my ingredients. It turns out to have kosher and vegan recipes as well. ■

Challah with Spinach and Ricotta Filling

This recipe was published in the *LA Times* and written by Phyllis Glazer in 2011. Glazer wrote this recipe in a column about Shavuot. It reminded me of the Sephardi tradition of the Bread of the Seven Heavens that I wrote about last summer. Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes. This makes two large challahs.

Filling
- 2 10-ounce packages of frozen chopped spinach, defrosted
- 1½ tsps oregano
- ½ tsp thyme
- ½ cup chopped fresh basil leaves (about 20 leaves)
- 3 or 4 garlic cloves, pressed
- $^1/_3$ cup pine nuts, toasted in a dry frying pan
- 2 cups ricotta cheese
- ¼ cup cornmeal or flour
- Salt and pepper to taste

Drain the spinach well and squeeze out excess liquid. Combine the spinach with the rest of the ingredients and refrigerate until needed.

Challah
- 2 eggs, plus one more beaten for brushing on the loaves
- 2 tbs sugar
- ¼ cup oil
- 1 heaping tsp of salt
- ¾ cup warm water
- 2 cups flour
- ½ cup whole wheat or spelt flour
- 2 tsps active dry yeast

Whisk together the eggs, sugar, oil, salt, and water in a small bowl. In a larger bowl, whisk together the flours and yeast. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and pour in the wet ingredients. Mix together until the dough is uniform but still somewhat sticky. Transfer to the counter or a lightly floured board and knead until it is smooth and soft, about five minutes. Cover and let rise for about an hour. Divide the dough in half, and place each half on a separate baking sheet covered with parchment paper. Stretch each half into an oval shape about 16½ inches by eight inches. Place half the filling on a strip down the center of each oval, packing the filling tightly so that the strip is no more than two-and-a-half inches wide. Leave space at the top and bottom of the dough to fold it over the filling after the next step. Use a sharp knife to cut strips about one-and-a-half inches wide down each side of the dough. It should look like a feather. Now, braid the challah by overlapping one strip from one side over the filling and then pinching the tips of the strips on the other side. The filling will show through. When you get to the bottom, fold the bottom of the dough over the bottom of the filling and tuck the edges under. Brush the loaves with the beaten egg, and sprinkle with sesame seeds, if you like. Bake about 30 minutes until the challah is puffed and nicely brown.

Spinach and Dumping Squash Salad

Adapted from The Spruce Eats blog

I've doubled this recipe to serve two and encourage you to make it your own by switching out the spinach for another green and switching out the dumpling squash for butternut or other small squash.
- 2 small squash
- 2 tsps olive oil
- 1 cup spinach leaves or other greens (kale or swiss chard)
- 1 can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- ½ cup cumin-roasted chickpeas (or switch out the cumin for paprika or garlic powder)
- 2 tbs crumbled feta cheese
- ½ cup tahini
- ½ cup water
- 4 to 6 tbs lemon juice
- 2 cloves garlic, grated
- Salt and pepper to taste

Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees. If you're using a round squash, cut off the top and scoop out the seeds. If you're using an oblong and thinner squash, cut into two and scoop out the seeds. Roast on a parchment-lined pan for about 20 minutes or until the skin is easily pierced. Roast the spiced chickpeas in a skillet for just a few minutes, until they are slightly browned. Mix the tahini, water, lemon juice, and garlic together to form a dressing. It's great for roasted carrots as well. Season with salt and pepper. Stuff the roasted squash with the spinach leaves and the chickpeas. Then add the feta cheese and then dressing.

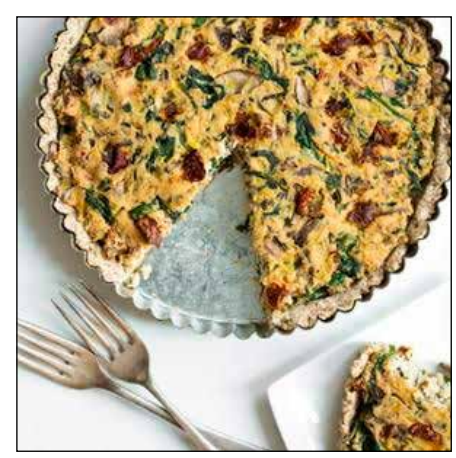
This is from our nephew, Max, who is a professional chef and makes this dip in much larger quantities. It's his take on hummus, but cool and new. Fresh pita seems like the proper way to scoop this up, but use your imagination. I used a fork. There is a review of the recipe on a site called Food Republic.
- 1 cup black or French lentils, cooked and cooled
- 1½ cups pistachios, toasted
- $^1/_3$ cup olive oil
- $^1/_3$ cup lemon juice
- ½ cup water (use the water the lentils were cooked in)
- 1 clove of garlic, grated
- 2 tsps salt
- 2 tsps ground coriander
- 1 cup parsley, finely chopped

Puree the pistachios and garlic in a food processor until very finely ground. Slowly pour in the olive oil, lemon juice, and water until smooth. Add salt and coriander and pulse to combine. Add the lentils and parsley and pulse to combine. Serve with fresh pita.

Sun-Dried Tomato, Mushroom, and Spinach Tofu Quiche

Reprinted from ohsheglows.com, but posted on Facebook by Shira Klein

I've seen this blog a few times and recommend it for vegan cooking. I'm adapting it to ingredients from my pantry and leaving out the ones I don't have. So, olive oil instead of coconut oil, or whatever oil you use for baking. I'm also skipping the addition of ground flax in the crust, and I don't have nutritional yeast to add to the filling. If you do, great! Add it.



Crust
- 1 cup whole almonds, ground into flour
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 tsp dried parsley, oregano or thyme or any combination
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- 1 tbs. oil
- 1 to 2½ tbs. water, as needed

Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees. Whisk together all the dry ingredients and mix in the oil, then add the water until the dough is sticky. Use a tart pan or pie pan, and use your fingers to press the dough into the pan and up the sides, poking a few holes in the dough. Bake for about 15 minutes until the dough is golden and firm to the touch. Set aside to cool, and raise the temperature of the oven to 375 degrees.

Filling
- 14 ounces firm tofu, wrapped in towel with a pot on top to squeeze out as much liquid as possible
- 1 tbs oil
- 1 onion or leek, thinly sliced
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 3 cups sliced cremini or other mushrooms
- ½ cup finely chopped chives or green onions
- ½ cup fresh basil leaves, finely chopped
- $^1/_3$ cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 cup baby spinach
- Salt, pepper, dried red pepper flakes, and oregano to taste

Break apart the tofu and use a food processor to blend until the tofu is smooth and creamy. You can add a dash of almond milk to help if it isn't creamy enough for you. Sauté the onion or leek and garlic in a skillet for a few minutes. Then add the mushroom for another 10 minutes or so, until they give off their liquid and it evaporates. Then stir in the herbs, sun-dried tomatoes, spinach, and seasonings until everything combines and the spinach wilts. Remove from the heat and add the blended tofu until everything is mixed together. Spoon into the crust and bake for about 35 minutes or until the quiche is firm to the touch. Allow the quiche to cool for about 15 minutes before you slice it. ■

Food is medicine: serving up medically sound solutions

Cathy Mizgerd, special to the WJN

For residents of Washtenaw County who were already facing challenges to survival prior to COVID-19, the pandemic has only added to the strain. "I'm 75 and low income," reads one recent email message from a client of Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, "and I get $16 a month in food assistance. If it weren't for deliveries from Food Gatherers and Jewish Family Services, I wouldn't have enough to eat; and I have no way to get to the store during this pandemic."

The Washtenaw County resident who shared this story is not alone. And while many social service providers had to close their doors temporarily during the pandemic — or had to significantly reduce their services — JFS has remained continuously open. In the process, the agency developed safe solutions for emergent issues, including increasingly widespread food insecurity.

According to 2020 Food Insecurity Projections from Feeding America, 15.2% of Washtenaw County residents may experience food insecurity — a significant increase from pre-pandemic levels. "Poor nutrition can increase the risk of developing health problems, including diabetes and hypertension. Food insecurity also exacerbates the complex challenges of managing a chronic disease."

The current pandemic highlights that a lack of food to eat, the most basic of all needs, is a vital public health concern. In response to community needs that arose with the onset of COVID-19, JFS retooled its food pantry to provide 100% contactless delivery and enhanced its nutrition offerings to include thousands of culturally sensitive meals and groceries to previously unserved residents across the county.

A large percentage of people requesting food during the pandemic have never before needed help. In light of the crucial need for safety precautions, JFS developed a comprehensive weekly food delivery program providing a combination of meals and groceries to those in need. Between mid-March and late October, JFS delivered 37,668 meals, including hundreds of kosher meals at Passover and the High Holidays. Nearly 400 JFS volunteers helped make this possible through their dedication of more than 5,700 hours to the preparation, packaging, and distribution of food to Washtenaw County residents. The effort continues.

Some of the meals and groceries delivered recently have been medically tailored or medically friendly. Historically the only specialty food pantry in Washtenaw County, JFS is distinctly well positioned to meet the nutritional needs of people with specialized medical diets, including diabetic, low-sodium, and gluten-free diets. Dietary restrictions such as halal and kosher are also accommodated at JFS.

To continue serving its clients in a meaningful way, the JFS specialty food pantry and its nutrition services program are exploring an important next step: the systematized provision of medically friendly and medically tailored meals (MTMs) and snacks.

To prepare for a next step of this magnitude will require the blessings of time, partnerships, and resources. In the moment, JFS is learning about the work of such organizations as the Food Is Medicine Coalition (fimcoalition.org).

According to the coalition, MTMs have their historical roots in the AIDS epidemic. Some 35 years ago, MTMs were developed in response to the widespread nutritional "wasting" so often experienced by people with AIDS. MTMs were developed to prevent or counter the devastating effects of nutritional wasting while simultaneously affirming the incontrovertible dignity of AIDS patients at a time when other treatments, such as antiretrovirals, were not yet available.

Advancements in the treatments available for people living with HIV — such as antiretroviral therapies—brought about changes in dietary needs and a parallel change in the nutrition science used to treat HIV. At the same time, medically tailored meal services have continued to be of use, in part through modifications to assist people living with a range of serious illnesses — from cardiovascular disease and renal failure to cancer and beyond. "The roots of medically tailored meals are in the HIV epidemic," said Alissa Wassung, senior director of policy and planning at the New York City-based God's Love We Deliver (GLWD), a partner in the Food Is Medicine Coalition, "but we've also taken what we've learned to expand to all diagnoses." GLWD serves people living with more than 200 diagnoses.

Working together with Food Gatherers, both JFS and Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels recently received funding support from Feeding America for the provision of MTMs. And, in a hopeful sign, health plans in many states around the country currently provide coverage for such meals. Through the Vital Seniors Collaborative, JFS is involved in a pilot program designed to explore, build, and strengthen relationships with health plans to deliver ongoing services of this

Center — the social enterprising arm of Jewish Family Services — which is working to establish connections with health plans and health systems to develop pathways for sustaining the delivery of MTMs.

Prescribing meals that are appropriate and therapeutic for the prevention and treatment of serious illness requires the expertise of a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN). JFS is currently exploring ways to establish a prep kitchen and partner with RDNs to develop medically friendly meal and snack menus for delivery to people in need throughout the county. In this way — with support, training, and collaboration — JFS hopes that someday not long in the future, it will be able to not only offer medically friendly meals, but also utilize its own prep kitchen to prepare and package snack-size and grocery options for delivery. One sought-after positive outcome may be — ultimately — allowing more people to stay as healthy and medically stable as possible while thriving in the place of their choosing.

For today, if you or someone you know in Washtenaw County is dealing with hunger or food insecurity, please contact JFS at 734-769-0209. ■

Employee wellness trainings are key to business success

Joanne Jarvi, special to the WJN

From illions of people working from home to depleted supply chains, 2020 challenged businesses of all sizes to move quickly and adapt. Businesses are still struggling to understand which of the pandemic's effects will be temporary and which will turn out to be permanent. One change that is all but certain to last is employees spending more of their time working from home.

The Amster Center Training Program proved this year that employee training plans — created to build and support a flexible, well, and emotionally supported workforce—are a key way that businesses keep up with the fast pace of these changes and challenges.

The Amster Center predicts that even after the direct effects of COVID-19 have been managed, much of the learning and development material presented to employees will continue to be consumed virtually. That means some pretty major shifts for some industries and individual businesses. Among the changes are seminars increasingly being held as webinars with few or no people in the physical audience and businesses increasingly developing digital content to meet the needs of their learners. Companies will find they save a surprising amount of money by not paying for travel, accommodations, and food associated with in-person seminars and other classes.

More and more, employees will expect companies to provide them with access to courses that may not directly apply to their positions with the firm, but nevertheless help them live happier, more contented, and healthier lives. Companies will largely do so, since it becomes easier for employees to thrive and maximize productivity when they're happy.

While many companies start by looking to training or workplace learning for increased productivity or other company-based measures, employee wellness and engagement are a better place to start. Employees who are healthy, engaged, and interested are more likely to produce the kind of results employers are looking for. Employees become increasingly invested in the success of their workplace, look for ways to stay with the company, and stay motivated to reach their own professional goals as they learn.

This year, and going forward, Amster Center wellness trainings are customized to take into account the pandemic experience. Employees can participate in classes to learn how to make positive change, understand anxiety and depression, create action plans for personal time management, manage stress, practice mindfulness, and cultivate balance with simple tools for goal setting and achievement.

To learn more about The Amster Center Training Program, please visit amstercenter.org or email jbjarvi@jfsannarbor.org ■

Diversity, equity, and inclusion at JFS

Shrina Eadeh, special to the WJN

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) have become everyday watchwords to describe widespread efforts to create a more welcoming and equitable environment for staff, clients, and constituents within the workplace.

Understanding what is meant by DEI begins with defining each of the terms. Diversity refers to the range of human differences and includes such identity markers as race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, social class, religion, ethnicity, national origin, political beliefs, and so on. Equity refers to the state or quality of being just, impartial, and fair. Inclusion is the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. Inclusion is also the act of creating an environment that is welcoming, respectful, and supportive. An inclusive environment embraces differences and values each of the individuals within it.

This year, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County expanded its DEI efforts in order to support and sustain meaningful, systematic change that will ensure an equitable and inclusive environment for staff, volunteers, and clients. Local and global protests for racial justice, the LGBTQ virtual day of silence, the International Women's Day marches, and many other movements and events propelled JFS to take a deeper look at how the agency responds to everyone who interacts with it.

For more than 27 years — as the only resettlement agency in the county assisting refugees with integration into the community — JFS has worked to embody inclusivity. The agency's international services programming includes case management, education, and support for both immigration and social adjustment. These offerings demand and receive a high level of cultural competence and sensitivity, as exemplified by JFS workers who, collectively, speak nearly 30 languages, ranging from Tigrinya and Turkish to Dari and Farsi.

The pursuit of racial equity and universal human dignity is in JFS's DNA. JFS renewed its public commitment to these principles and ideals this year, posting a statement on the agency website at jfsannarbor.org quoting the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "It is not possible to be in favor of justice for some people and not be in favor of justice for all people."

Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County denounces racism in all its forms and stands with everyone in the community who is aggrieved and exhausted by the heartbreak and injustice of systemic racism, oppression, and intolerance. To support its own work in this area, JFS formalized an internal DEI officer position this year. It also hired an outside consultant to support the agency's DEI efforts and assist JFS with transforming intentions into action.

JFS also established a DEI committee to ensure that DEI considerations are foremost in strategic planning efforts, as well as in everyday operations. The committee is also tasked with ensuring annual DEI training. The board and staff members who serve on the committee represent all areas of the agency.

This work takes place in an environment where a deep and intrinsic commitment to diversity and inclusion remains strong and unwavering. This commitment has been among the key guiding principles of the organization since its founding. As a leading service organization in the community, JFS will continue to invest its time and resources into ensuring diversity, equitability, and inclusion for all. ■

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Men have dominated Jewish texts for most of history. These women are trying to change that.

Shira Hanau, originally written for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

When Danielle Kranjec committed to using only Jewish texts written by women and queer people in the classes she taught for Hillel International's Springboard Fellowship, a program that places recent college graduates in positions at college campus Hillels across the country, she knew she was taking on a challenging task.

After all, for most of Jewish history, women weren't encouraged to take on religious leadership roles or write commentaries on the Torah or Talmud.

The Kranjec Test was named for Danielle Kranjec, who took it upon herself to teach only sources written by women and queer people.
PHOTO CAPTION:COURTESY OF DANIELLE KRANJEC

But Kranjec knew that elevating the work of women would be worth the effort, both because doing so would communicate the value of women's insights to her students and she believes the mismatch between the diversity of the people teaching Torah today and the sources they teach had grown too great. Also, as a Jewish educator and trained historian, she knew there were a plethora of texts that might not be considered "Torah" in the traditional sense but could serve as rich source material.

Much of the time, those who assemble materials for Jewish study sessions — commonly known as "source sheets" — start with the Torah text, working their way to the rabbinic texts, the Mishna and Talmud, followed by commentaries on texts written over a span of more than a thousand years. Men wrote the vast majority of those texts.

"I'm trying to do something different, to start in the lives of women and then follow the Torah that emerges from that," Kranjec said, noting her love for the memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln, a 17th century Jewish woman whose autobiography is an important primary text for Jewish historians.

Two years later, Kranjec's name is now synonymous with a growing movement to advance women's voices in Jewish text study. The Kranjec Test, coined by her colleagues at Hillel International, calls on educators to include a text written by someone who is not male on any source sheet including at least two Jewish texts.

Along with other initiatives to encourage more women to publish Jewish religious writing, the test is shaking up the world of Jewish study and calling attention to the ways in which women are still not equally represented in positions of authority in the world of Jewish text study.

The Kranjec Test is inspired by the Bechdel test, in which a work of fiction or film passes if it includes a conversation between two female characters about something other than a man. That test has become well known after being invented by cartoonist Alison Bechdel in 1985, though according to The Hollywood Reporter, approximately half of the top-grossing 25 movies that came out in 2016 did not pass the test.

But the Kranjec Test is perhaps more challenging because unlike fiction and film, Jewish study largely revolves around texts written long before the modern feminist movement.

Rabbanit Jenna Englender dances with the Torah during her graduation ceremony from Yeshivat Maharat in New York, June 17, 2019. (SHULAMIT SEIDLER-FELLER/MAHARAT)

Still, in recent years, traditional text study has ceased to be the exclusive domain of men. Women have taken their place among the most well-known and respected Torah teachers today, teachers and activists for feminist causes in the Jewish world say, leaving the texts themselves as the next frontier. So in addition to focusing on the people who are visible in positions of authority today, Jewish educators are going to the source material, trying to right the balance between representation of men and women in the texts they are teaching.

"If the leadership and the 'no more manels' is top down, this is more grassroots," Kranjec said.

The test has adherents among Hillel educators and is spreading among educators at pluralistic institutions of Jewish learning. It's recently been the subject of debate among Jewish educators on listservs and in heated social media discussions.

Holding oneself accountable for including women's work even in traditionally male domains such as halacha, or Jewish law, carries a benefit, according to Elana Stein Hain, scholar in residence and director of faculty at the Shalom Hartman Institute, where she leads a research group that focuses on issues of gender and leadership in the Jewish community. By bringing in sources written by women that are less directly related to the subject being taught, "what you've done is actually elucidated and expanded the way we understand these earlier ideas," she said.

But not everyone who wants to see more women's voices in Jewish text study believes the test is a good idea.

"It'll create a sort of impression that a woman who finds her way onto a source sheet hasn't done so because she is brilliant and erudite and profound but because of this positive discrimination," said Gila Fine, editor in chief of Maggid Books, an imprint of Koren Publishers in Jerusalem.

Fine said she almost always includes women on her source sheets in teaching at the Pardes Institute in Jerusalem — but that's because doing so is relatively easy in the subject she teaches, aggadah, which includes stories from the Talmud.

"Women have earned their place fair and square in the world of aggadah," Fine said. "They're two steps behind in the world of halacha, and they'll get there, but creating that shortcut will hurt them in the long run."

In a blog post from September, Rabbi Michael Rosenberg, a professor of rabbinics at Hebrew College, wrote about his own difficulty in finding a suitable woman-authored text to use in a class centered on a rabbinic text. Rosenberg eventually included a piece by the modern poet Mary Oliver and wrote that it "brought new meaning and depth to the source" that he would not have found had he limited his sources to premodern ones.

"The historical exclusion of women from Torah study was not only hurtful to women (though that would be enough reason to want to remedy it); it also hurt Torah," he wrote. "Because of the loss of people with different experiences and perspectives, the Torah is haseirah, it's lacking, it's not its full self."

To Fine, what's needed are more and more diverse religious texts written by women. Maggid has made publishing books by women teachers a priority, she said, and in recent years has brought to print books by Erica Brown, a popular lecturer and a professor at George Washington University; Rachel Berkovits, a lecturer at the Pardes Institute; and Nechama Price, the director of Yeshiva University's graduate program in Talmud for women. In the past few years, three books of traditional halachic responsa, answers to Jewish legal questions, written by women have been published, including one by Maggid, constituting what Fine calls "a huge step in the right direction for women."

But Fine said she often finds herself having to convince women teachers that their work is good enough to publish or that they are ready.

"I will get many, many manuscripts by a man in his 20s who has written a book about Genesis or Maimonides, something as grandiose as that," Fine said. "Conversely … when I have actively approached women who are established and brilliant and profound and nuanced in the Torah that they do and I say I think you're great and should be writing a book, more often than not the response I get is 'I don't think I'm quite ready.'"

Users of Sefaria, an online database of Jewish texts that allows one to see hyperlinks between texts in a side-by-side format, also want to see more texts by women. Sara Wolkenfeld, Sefaria's director of learning, said it's not uncommon for users to complain that there aren't enough texts written by women in the site's database.

"That's not a Sefaria problem," Wolkenfeld said. "That's an issue with the history of Jewish texts."

The site is taking steps to change that history. Along with Yeshivat Maharat, a Modern Orthodox yeshiva in New York City that ordains women, Sefaria is launching a fellowship to encourage Jewish women to put their ideas onto the page. The program will provide training and stipends to 12 women who will each write an article, book chapter, legal opinion or other form of Torah text.

"We want to create a space for women to say, no, I do have something to contribute and I can do that work and I can put it out there," Wolkenfeld said.

Fine said the initiative is a welcome addition to a space that is slowly but surely beginning to change in ways that could reshape the idea of who gets to create Torah.

"It's still individual attempts," Fine said, adding that with time, "these trickles will become a current."

Several women advocating for increasing representation of women in Jewish text study have struggled with the idea that Torah texts written by women would be inherently different from those written by men. Even so, Stein Hain argued, it would be worth including them to expand the quantity of texts available to learn from.

"I'm not sold on the idea that a woman's take is going to be different but I am sold on the idea that we shouldn't be limiting the voices to male voices," said Stein Hain. "You're missing out on more people having good ideas about Torah."

Efforts to increase the volume of texts by women that are part of the Jewish library may never lead to actual parity — there's only so much that can be accomplished by modern women adding their own scholarship to the collected works of thousands of years of male scholars.

"On the 'mikraot gedolot' page, we're always going to have the same people," Kranjec said of the classic medieval rabbinic commentaries traditionally printed alongside the text of the Torah. "That's not really going to change because of our extensive, beautiful, wonderful long, complicated, patriarchal textual tradition."

But if they can't catch up, Kranjec argued, modern teachers have to make space for them on the pages of their source sheets, both through newly published scholarship and by mining the tradition for places where women's voices have shone through.

"I need us to learn Gluckel in conversation with 17th century Jewish thought, I need us to read other early modern poets … I need all of that to be a part of the conversation and modern writers, too," she said.

In summary, she added, "I want all of it." ■

Looking for Rose: How did they meet?

Clare Kinberg, 13th installment in a series

Sometime during the decade-long Great Depression, my aunt Rose and Zebedee Arnwine met and moved to Chicago together, but I don't know when or how. If I could just know this one impossible thing, then I think I would be able to grasp their lives. How did my aunt, a divorced Ashkenazi Jewish woman whose child had been adopted by her sister, meet a thrice-married African American farmer from Muskogee, Oklahoma?

How do any lovers meet? My parents met in St. Louis in the late 1930s at the Young Men's Hebrew Association. Founded in 1880, the St. Louis Y recreation center was heartily utilized by Jewish immigrants for drama, sports clubs, and socializing. Well into his 50s, my father still sang songs from the *Pirates of Penzance* that had been performed at the Y when he was in his teens, and he still played handball with the friends he made there. St. Louis Jews will always ask a new acquaintance what high school they attended — high school is a defining signifier. For my father, who went to work at 14 when his father died, the Y was his high school.

I met my wife Patti 40 years ago through a mutual friend in the lesbian community. The friend was one of my housemates, and Patti was in a therapy group with her. We first crossed paths at a Sweet Honey in the Rock concert sponsored by the University of Missouri Women's Center, but I only saw her out of the corner of my eye. Our first introduction was in my kitchen, over a casual dinner.

For my aunt Rose and Zebedee Arnwine, commonplace social meetings would not have been common. Segregation and racism severely limited opportunities for casual acquaintance at work, with mutual friends, at a coffee shop or bar, or walking down the street.

In 1916, when Rose was eight years old, St. Louis voters passed, by a huge margin, the first voter initiative-based segregation ordinance in the country. White (including some Jewish) precincts that bordered Black neighborhoods voted by a margin of eight to one to make it illegal for Black people to move into white neighborhoods. According to this law, no person could move onto a block where 75% of that block's inhabitants were of a different race.

In 1930s St. Louis, interracial marriages were illegal, socially unacceptable, and dangerous. I try to imagine the commonplace moments when a 20-something Jewish woman from an Eastern European immigrant family and a 30-something Black man from Oklahoma could make an acquaintance that would develop into a 20-year relationship. Somehow, their characters, beliefs, and commitments — combined with circumstances — created an opportunity that Aunt Rose and Mr. Arnwine turned into something lasting.

What were they looking for when they found each other? Was their meeting happenstance, or part of a deliberate effort to organize across racial barriers? I can imagine

both scenarios: a chance meeting and a result of purposeful organizing.

I want my telling of my aunt's life to conjure the true Rose, yet at the same time, I long for her unknowable life to help me understand cloudy and mysterious family relationships, and to help me understand my seemingly intrinsic motivations to act for racial and economic justice, to understand if these are somehow related to my father's virulent racism and anti-communism.

According to political historians, the Communist Party and associated groups formed the only movement during the 1930s to address racism deliberately through interracial organizing. The policy of the CP in the 1930s was to build the protest movements from the grassroots, from "the neighborhoods."

Thinking about my father and communism brings up a memory.

It is 1970, and I'm in high school. Each morning after my father leaves for work, I go into his closet and pick out an older white short-sleeve, button-up work shirt. Over the shirt, I put on my uncle Nathan's discarded suede sport coat, all very loose fitting. I read a lot and like to learn, but I'm fed up with my suburban high school. I find a flyer advertising a new alternative high school, Logos, a school without walls, student-directed learning, the high school I would design for myself. I am enthusiastic to apply, but Mom says I need to ask Dad.

Each evening my dad would come home from work, often later than my mother expected him, walk to the liquor cabinet, and throw back a few shots. After dinner he'd throw back a couple more and then fall asleep in the lounger in front of the TV.

I approach him in the lounger, ask him about Logos. He snarls. "You're not going there. This is a school for losers, dropouts," Dad says.

"But not only," I retort, offended by his disdain. "It's for anyone, of any academic ability, who doesn't conform to traditional schools." But Dad isn't having it. He explodes with unexpected venom. "This school is run by a bunch of communists, and you won't go near it, ever."

I know the argument is over, but I'm left entirely perplexed. Communists? Dad is spent; there isn't anything left to talk about. Neither Logos nor communism are mentioned again.

Something about my wanting to go to Logos touched a raw nerve in my dad, an emotional, fearful, angry place that made no sense to me at 16. Now I wonder if it had something to do with his estrangement from his sister Rose.

Of all the scenarios I can imagine for Aunt Rose and Mr. Arnwine's first acquaintance, I want to place them in the crowd on July 11, 1932, at one of the first Unemployment Council protests outside St. Louis City Hall. In the depths of the Great Depression, thousands of people listened to three hours of speeches railing against the inadequate administration of relief funds. In newspaper reports on this protest and many others, the Unemployment Council is described as a "communist" organization, or it is said that the protests were organized by "the Reds." When I see a picture from the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* from that day in 1932, I search the many Black and white faces for Aunt Rose and Mr. Arnwine.

In 1932, Rose lived on the same block in a separate address from the rest of the family. About a block away, Fannie Feigenbaum, a grassroots leader in the emerging Unemployment Councils, lived with her family. Rose and Fannie were the same age, with similar families, living in the same ghetto of Jewish immigrants.

In a 1991 interview with Rosemary Feurer for her book *Radical Labor Organizing in the Midwest, 1900-1950*, Fannie Feigenbaum Goldberg reported how the 1932 protest came about: "There was no major leader in St. Louis, we were just a group of people who believed the same thing. It was small. The first big demonstration, the papers came out with a big headline, that come Monday the relief would be cut off, whatever little relief there was would be cut off. The Unemployment Councils were just beginning to function. They called a meeting at City Hall. To our own surprise, all of St. Louis turned out. So we had a group elected right there, to talk to the Mayor. . . . I mean you can't just cut off relief of people who have nothing! Well, the committee couldn't get in. It took about an hour, and the police came and fired teargas to disperse the crowd. It looked awful because everyone was running away. But it was such a tremendous and big thing that it kind of surprised us. Instead of being intimidated by the attitude, we decided we had to start working."

This was what the newspapers described as "storming City Hall."

Fannie described the build up to these demonstrations from her own grassroots perspective, but the organizational backgrounds to these protests reveal intriguing connections between St. Louis and Muskogee, Oklahoma, Zebedee Arnwine's hometown, through the Workers Alliance of America (WAA).

The WAA was a training ground for many leaders in local Unemployment Councils, including the organizers of protests of the unemployed in St. Louis. The WAA also organized unemployed Black and white farmers in Muskogee. What's more, I found that in the late 1930s, Edward O. (Rose's first husband and the father of her son) had remarried and settled in Muskogee with his new wife, opening a dry goods store where he sold dresses sewn in St. Louis. Zebebee's mother Catherine, his ex-wife Tamah, and their daughter Rebecca all lived near each other in Muskogee. The O's lived in a building next to the building where the Black neighborhood begins. Catherine Arnwine lived two blocks away and just across the street.

There are so many touchpoints of location. I imagine Rose and Zebedee meeting at a protest, organizing for the Workers' Alliance, somehow running into each other in Muskogee. I can't know, yet I can't let it go. ■

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JYP raises 2K with a 5K

Jessica Weil, special to the WJN

From November 20 to December 20, the Jewish Young Professionals of Greater Ann Arbor hosted the Hanukkah Hustle Virtual 5K. Over 65 participants from greater Ann Arbor and across the county ran or walked 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) to support the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor's 2021 Annual Community Campaign. In the first organized campaign fundraiser held by JYP in many years, participants raised $2,000 to enrich Jewish life locally and around the world.

JYP recognizes the importance of the campaign to the local and overseas Jewish communities and expressed a desire to give back in a fun, engaging, and accessible way. This campaign effort is an example of JYP's mission to create community and learning opportunities, and to make the world a better place through tikkun olam for young adults in their 20s and 30s. JYP participant Jason Brown says, "As a runner, I enjoyed participating in the Hanukkah Hustle. The Federation has always supported JYP, and it felt good to give something back, especially given these difficult times."

Participants felt a sense of community throughout the monthlong event by submitting their times and photos with the hashtag #HanukkahHustle2020 on JYP's Facebook and Instagram pages. With this virtual 5K, JYP demonstrated the positive power of coming together for a good cause in distant times. ■

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Hebrew Day School uses a flexible approach to social emotional learning

Sara Goldshlack, special to the WJN

It's Rock Brain! He's bothering you! You have to defeat him!" To my delight, I heard one second-grader say these words to his classmate during lunch one day. The second-grader had noticed his classmate arguing about the placement of her lunch seat and made a connection to a social emotional learning (SEL) lesson about flexibility. Earlier in the week, the students had been introduced to the personification of inflexibility, a villain named Rock Brain, from the social thinking curriculum. They learned that the best way to defeat Rock Brain was to be willing to modify one's thinking or plans. "Be a superflexible superhero!" could be heard in the lower elementary classes, while in upper elementary classes, the slogan was "Find your flexibility!" It was thrilling to see a student applying this lesson to a real-world situation.

SEL, also called social emotional literacy, is the process of developing and practicing social and emotional skills. People engage their social and emotional skillset to cope with feelings, make decisions, find empathy for others, and set goals. Research has correlated the strength of people's social and emotional skills with a higher likelihood of personal and professional successes. Even before the coronavirus pandemic, Hebrew Day School had begun to implement weekly SEL lessons designed to support students' social and emotional well-being. Students worked through lessons in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. With the pandemic came a new and urgent configuration of social and emotional needs, and the SEL plan was amended. Material from other curricula was incorporated, and several new units were added including the new anchoring principle: flexibility.

SEL made its way into educational journals in the mid-1990s, but it was almost 10 years before the first state adopted SEL

learning standards. The coronavirus pandemic notwithstanding, the wheel of change at the societal level turns slowly. Looking closely, within one generation, the norms of childrearing across much of the nation underwent significant change. One generation ago, it was common to find children biking through neighborhoods in mixed-age groups, playing spontaneous, self-directed games without much adult supervision. There were problems, to be sure, like bullies and broken bones. There were also benefits: namely, children came through this independent environment with strong SEL skills, having practiced solving problems, making friends, and assessing risks from an early age. It is more common to find children in the current generation being shuttled between scheduled activities by a parent, or attending structured playdates orchestrated by adults. This generation boasts children who are more academically enriched and physically safer, but the environment does not readily offer experiences that foster practice of SEL skills. Near-constant adult supervision means that children don't need to judge risks for themselves and problems are often solved with adult guidance. To support the current generation of children in developing social emotional competencies, schools started teaching the skills directly.

The coronavirus pandemic has brought a new challenge to the current generation of children, and its long-term effects are yet to be seen. Though more important than ever, the process of teaching social emotional lessons this year has been wrought with challenges. A sharing circle loses its intimacy when participants have to sit six feet apart or are viewing one another on computers. There is a unique challenge in teaching about emotions while wearing a mask or teaching about body language on a Zoom screen. Perhaps the most daunting challenge is helping students to feel calm and safe in a world in which teachers don't necessarily feel calm and safe. Children in every generation crave order, and teachers, parents, and caregivers are doing our best to provide consistency and reassurance during an inconsistent and distressing time.

This school year has demanded flexibility of everyone, and the practice of flexibility has been required for many SEL lessons. The results have been positive, sometimes remarkably so. One lesson helped students understand that creativity is another form of flexibility and for 30 minutes, students played an improvisation game with found objects. During a lesson on self-regulation, students did activities like visualization and yoga rather than learning classic breathing strategies because of the danger associated with deep breathing around an aerosolized virus. In a reflection, students identified the improvisation game and the visualization activity as their favorite lessons — lessons that would not have been taught during a normal year. My favorite moment from the year was when the students were asked a challenge question during a lesson about flexibility. "Are there times when Rock Brain can help you? Is it ever good to be inflexible?" After a time, one student's face lit up. "It's a good thing Martin Luther King, Jr. had Rock Brain," the student said. "Otherwise, civil rights might never have happened." Thinking like that makes me sure — Rock Brain sure — that these kids will be just fine. ■

JCLP students and alumni connect in cyberspace

Emily Gordon, special to the WJN

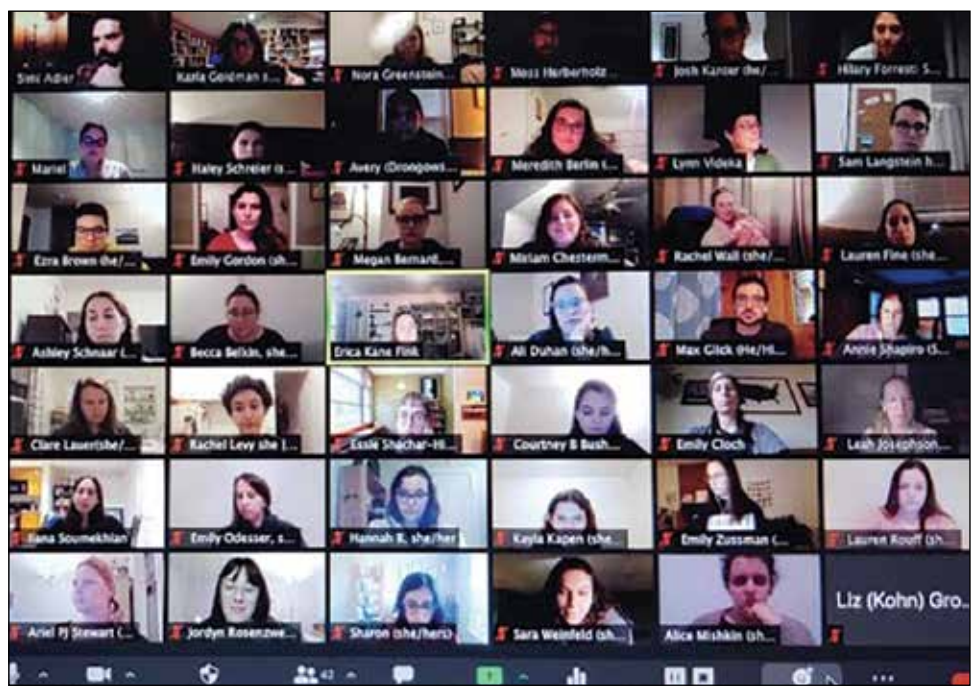
Late fall and early winter have long been considered a time of homecoming and connection. In normal years, many travel to see family members over the Thanksgiving and winter holidays, spend quality time catching up with old friends, and reflect upon personal and professional experiences of the past year.

Such traditions have, like everything else this year, gone virtual, and the University of Michigan School of Social Work's Jewish Communal Leadership Program followed suit with an online edition of its annual alumni seminar and restructured virtual site visits.

"Without the opportunity to visit agencies and travel to different communities, we lose the immersive experiences that help students build their understanding of the landscape of Jewish communal life and of the work of different organizations," said JCLP director Karla Goldman.

While the JCLP seminar regularly brings in leaders from across the region and country, the need to go remote has expanded opportunities for engagement. Virtual sessions have created space for deeply engaged conversation and connection not only with national leaders, but between JCLP students and alumni from JCLP and its predecessor programs in the School of Social Work (Project StaR and the Drachler Program).

"It is exciting to be able to bring our alumni into these conversations in ways that haven't been possible before," Goldman says. JCLP, STaR, and Drachler alumni have



logged into virtual site visits focused on different sectors of Jewish organizational life, with some sessions featuring alumni whose UM graduations spanned 25 years.

Nearly 50 current and former JCLP students from coast to coast attended a special virtual version of JCLP's annual alumni seminar, usually attended by about nine or 10 alumni who live and work locally. This seminar has become a favorite tradition of the fall calendar as new students begin to see and feel the power of the larger network they are joining. It was moving to see alumni fill the Zoom chat box with inside jokes, questions about each other's well-being, and warm memories of their time as Wolverines.

The use of randomly populated breakout rooms allowed alumni to mix and mingle as well as get to know current students and their aspirations at a fun, quick pace.

Attendees' only complaints were that there could never be enough time to talk about all the possible topics worth exploring together.

Miriam Chesterman, a first-year student in the community change pathway, finds the online alumni sessions to be eye opening in terms of career possibilities after graduation. "There are so many different career paths for not only social workers, but Jewish social workers, that I had never realized before. It was amazing to get to see the wide spectrum that JCLP alumni have spanned in their careers," she says.

Hilary Forrest, a second-year student in the management and leadership pathway, agrees. "Heading into my final semester, I now feel like I've been exposed to a whole new world of Jewish communal work and am even more inspired by the work that is already being done." ■

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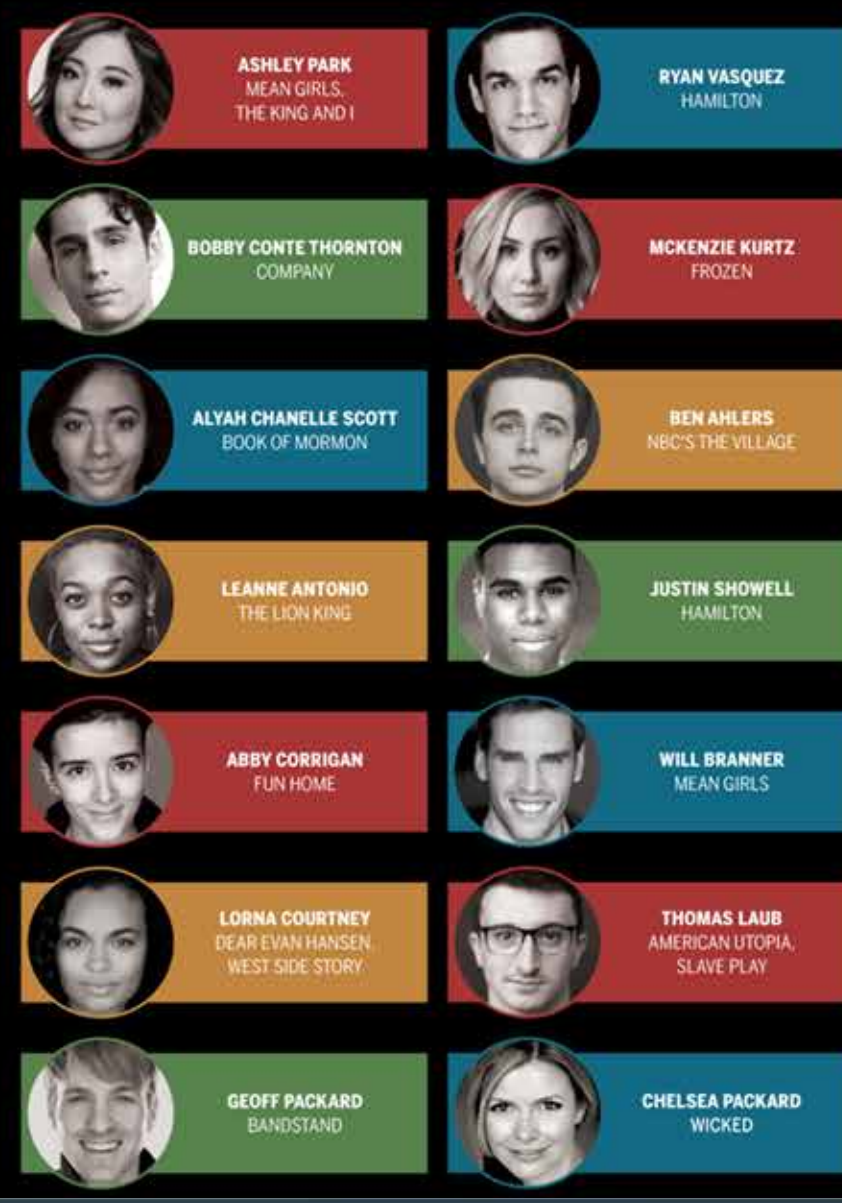

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Born in Ann Arbor and raised at both Temple Beth Emeth and Beth Israel Congregation, Aly Halpert is a queer Jewish young adult musician, writer, activist, and organizer living on Schaghticoke land in Millerton, NY. A singer, pianist, drummer, and guitar player, Aly writes songs for building community, working for collective liberation, and visioning different worlds. Aly leads music and prayer for Jewish community, including Eden Village Camp, Let My People Sing, Kol Tzedek Synagogue, and Linke Fligl.

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Calendar

January 2021

The Calendar has been updated to reflect events that are happening only online. Always check websites or call for updates before planning to attend anything listed here. For prayer services, check congregation websites.

Friday 1

Candle Lighting 4:53 p.m. Vayechi

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 2

Havdallah 5:59 p. m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Sunday 3

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 3 p.m.

Lego Contest: BIC. Special Tu B'shvat build. 4 p.m.

Monday 4

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

WTBE Cooks. 3:30 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. Zoom.. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 5

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m. *See first Tuesday of month.*

Wednesday 6

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 .p. m

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Biblical Hebrew Class with Liz Fried. BIC. Registration on BIC website.7 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion 7 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 7

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Pirke Avot with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5p.m.

Tea and Torah Study with Rabbi Caine. BIC. 6:30 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 8

Candle Lighting 5:00 p.m. Shemot

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 9

Havdallah 6:06 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Sunday 10

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Intro to Judaism with Rav Nadav: BIC. 1 p.m.

Family Game Night: BIC. 5 p.m.

The Stories Behind the Stories of Genesis with Liz Fried: BIC. Registration on BIC website. 7 p.m.

Beginner's Hebrew with Yael Ross. BIC. Registration on BIC website. 7 p.m.

Monday 11

Historical Novel Reading Group: WTBE. Anthony Doer, All the Light We Cannot See. Contact Molly Lindner, burnham@umich.edu. 12:30 p.m.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Tuesday 12

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Rosh Chodesh Circle: Pardes Hannah. 7 p.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 13

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p. m

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Biblical Hebrew Class with Liz Fried. BIC. Registration on BIC website.7 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion 7 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 14

Rosh Chodesh Shvat

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Pirke Avot with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5 p.m.

Tea and Torah Study with Rabbi Caine. BIC. 6:30 p.m.

Putting Our Values into Action: An Intergenerational Conversation: JYP and JCRC. Description: Join Federation's Jewish Young Professionals and Jewish Community Relations Committee for an interactive and educational event exploring the Jewish imperative to act. This event will connect different generations through text study and discussion. Rebecca Epstein of Bend the Arc and Temple Beth Emeth will also be sharing about how Judaism informs her activism. 7 p.m.

A2Tribe for 20s and 30s, into to Shabbat. BIC. 7 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 15,

Candle Lighting 5:07 p.m. Vaera

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 16

Havdallah 6:13 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Havdalah service with guest artist Aly Halpert. TBE. 7 p.m.

Sunday 17

Zohar Study: Pardes Hannah. 11 a.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 3 p.m.

Spiritual and Energetic Practices for a Healthy New Year: Pardes Hannah-4:00 p.m.

The Stories Behind the Stories of Genesis with Liz Fried: BIC. Registration on BIC website. 7 p.m.

Beginner's Hebrew with Yael Ross. BIC. Registration on BIC website. 7 p.m.

Monday 18, MLK, Jr. Day

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

WTBE Cooks. 3:30 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. Zoom.. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 19

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 20

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p. m

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion 7 p.m.

Biblical Hebrew Class with Liz Fried. BIC. Registration on BIC website.7 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 21

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Pirke Avot with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5 p.m.

Tea and Torah Study with Rabbi Caine. BIC. 6:30 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 22

Candle Lighting 5:16 p.m. Bo

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 23

Havdallah 6:21 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Sunday 24

Mystery Reader: BIC. 11 a.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Intro to Judaism with Rav Nadav: BIC. 1 p.m.

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 3 p.m.

Spiritual and Energetic Practices for a Healthy New Year: Pardes Hannah-4:00 p.m.

The Stories Behind the Stories of Genesis with Liz Fried: BIC. Registration on BIC website. 7 p.m.

Beginner's Hebrew with Yael Ross. BIC. Registration on BIC website. 7 p.m.

Monday 25

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Tuesday 26

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

From Age-ing to Sage-ing: A Revolutionary Approach to Growing Older: Pardes Hannah Six weekly 2-hour on-line sessions. 4:30 p.m

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 27

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p. m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion 7 p.m.

Biblical Hebrew Class with Liz Fried. BIC. Registration on BIC website.7 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 28

Tu B'Shvat

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Pirke Avot with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5p.m.

Tea and Torah Study with Rabbi Caine. BIC. 6:30 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 29

Candle Lighting 5:25 p.m. Beshalach

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 30

Havdallah 6:29 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Sunday 31

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 3 p.m.

The Stories Behind the Stories of Genesis with Liz Fried: BIC. Registration on BIC website. 7 p.m.

Beginner's Hebrew with Yael Ross. BIC. Registration on BIC website. 7 p.m.

Phone numbers, websites and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM): 1429 Hill Street, 248-408-3269, annarborminyan.org

Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734.445.1910, aarecon.org

Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000 Washtenaw Ave, 734-665-9897, bethisrael-aa.org

Chabad House: 715 Hill Street, 734-995-3276, jewmich.com

Frankel Center: 202 S. Thayer St., lsa.umich.edu/judaic/

Jewish Community Center (JCC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 745-971-0990, jccannarbor.org

Jewish Cultural Society (JCS): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-975-9872, jewishculturalsociety.org

Jewish Family Services (JFS): 2245 South State Street, 734-769-0209, jfsannarbor.org

Jewish Federation: 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-677-0100, jewishannarbor.org

Pardes Hannah: 2010 Washtenaw Ave, 734-761-5324, pardeshannah.org

Temple Beth Emeth (TBE): 2309 Packard Road, 734-665-4744, templebethemeth.org

UM Hillel: 1429 Hill Street 734-769-0500, michiganhillel.org

Our father Jacob's blessings to his grandchildren

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, special to the WJN

On Shabbat, January 2, we will be reading the Torah portion Vayechi. We witness a conversation between the aged patriarch Jacob and his son Joseph. Joseph brought his two sons to Jacob for his blessing. He placed Menashe, the first born, near Jacob's right hand and Efraim, the younger of the two, near Jacob's left hand. However, when Jacob blessed the youngsters, he crossed his hands over and placed his right hand on Efraim's head and his left on Menashe's head.

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein

Joseph explained to Jacob, "It is not so, my father." Moving Jacob's hands, he continued, "for this is the first born."

"I know, my son, I know," was Jacob's reply. "Also, he [Menashe] will become a people. He, too, will be great. But his younger brother will be greater than him."

According to our Sages, neither Jacob nor Joseph made a mistake. Rather, their priorities were different.

Menashe and Efraim symbolize two distinct aspects of a Jew's G-dly service. Joseph believed that the G-dly service represented by Menashe was more advantageous, whereas Jacob felt that Efraim's was higher.

Joseph named his oldest son Menashe, "For G-d has caused me to forget ("nashani") all of my toil and all my father's house." This name intimates Joseph's anguish over being distanced from his father's home and his native lifestyle. His younger son, he called Efraim, "For G-d has caused me to be fruitful [hifrani] in the land of my affliction." Here, Joseph thanks G-d for the benefits that he reaped specifically because he was living in exile.

When Joseph brought his sons for his father's blessing, his feelings of sorrow over being separated from his family ruled. The spiritual service this situation parallels is the desire to cleave to G-d, even in exile. Jacob, however, viewed the exile differently, represented by the name Efraim. He saw that there is an "advantage" of exile; in exile, one changes darkness into light. And the light which follows darkness is much brighter, much more noticeable.

The paths of Joseph and Jacob should both be manifested in our lives. We must realize that we are far away from our father's house; we are still in exile, and the final redemption has not yet come. Just as important, or possibly more important, is to realize that we can actually light up the darkness of exile. This comes about through studying Torah and observing the commandments.

When a Jew finds himself in a situation or surroundings that are uncomfortable, he must not only be troubled by it and think of the day when he can escape. Rather, he should work to his utmost ability to change that which is bad to good, the dark to light, for this is the entire purpose of being in exile. ■

A lesson from Pesachim

Rabbi Jared Anstandig, special to the WJN

In 1923 a Polish rabbi, Meir Schapiro, launched a project known as Daf Yomi (Hebrew for "daily page"). He envisioned Jews around the world studying the entire Talmud simultaneously, one page each day. His idea took off and seven-and-a-half years later, when hundreds of Jews came together to celebrate the Talmud's completion. Fast forward to January 2020, when I was privileged to be one of tens of thousands (as an observer, sadly, not as a celebrant) at the 13th Siyum Hashas (completion of the Talmud) held in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Jared Anstandig

Now, 365 days and 365 pages into the 14th cycle, the Daf Yomi recently began the Tractate of Pesachim. As you may be able to guess from the name, Pesachim details the laws of the Passover holiday (amazingly, Pesachim will be completed this year less than a week before seder night). Tractate Pesachim is interesting for many historical reasons. But perhaps the greatest curiosity about it is the little-known fact that this particular volume of Talmud was discovered by the Allies in Hitler's bunker after World War Two.

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, the founding rabbi of the city of Efrat in Israel, writes about this discovery in his book of personal anecdotes, Listening to God. Rabbi Riskin describes that this volume of Talmud changed hands multiple times following the war, and ultimately ended up in the possession of Rabbi Yitzchak HaLevi Herzog, the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel. Rabbi Riskin proceeded to detail the amazing irony in this story:

> *Hitler wanted to destroy the Jewish people; Hitler was destroyed in 1945 and a new Israel was reborn three years later with the establishment of the Jewish state. Hitler wanted to destroy Judaism, to bury the last Talmud tractate; Daf Yomi, the renaissance of the Jewish study of Talmud, the very Shas itself, buried him.* (*Listening to God*, page 425)

In truth, no one is quite sure why Hitler held onto this book of the Jewish laws and traditions of Passover. But whatever the reason, the message of the story is powerful: No enemy of the Jewish people can sever the lasting relationship between the Jewish people and its sacred texts. Whether it's the study of one page of Talmud a day, one meme related to one page of Talmud a day (it's really a thing: https://twitter.com/dafyomemes), or some other study of Jewish text, let us not pass up precious opportunities to engage in our textual traditions. ■

TBE Events in January

All events and services are virtual. Go to the Temple Beth Emeth website for the Zoom links and more information.

Families with Young Children Tot Shabbat

Fridays
Tot Shabbat Services at 5:45 p.m.
Shira Service at 6:15 p.m.
All of your favorite songs led by TBE's tot team, Cantor Hayut and Rabbi Whinston. Contact cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org for more information.

Daily morning blessings

Daily at 9:15 a.m.
Join Rabbi Whinston each morning via Zoom for a short morning blessing.

Daily afternoon blessings

Mondays–Thursdays at 3 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut each afternoon via Zoom for a short afternoon blessing.

Women of TBE Historical Novel Reading Group

Monday, January 11, at 12:30 p.m.
The WTBE Reading Group meets on the second Monday of each month. Contact Molly Lindner at burnham@umich.edu.

WTBE Cooks Monday meals

Mondays, January 4 and 18, at 3:30 p.m.

Adult b'nei-mitzvah classes

Mondays at 6 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut for an hourlong session in either the afternoon or the evening. To join the class, or for more information, contact Cantor Hayut.

Women's Torah study

Mondays, January 4 and 18, at 7 p.m.
An in-depth study and lively discussion of the week's Torah portion led by Cantor Hayut. The group will explore various passages from the portion, looking at several translations and commentaries.

Twenty-five-minute mindfulness with Jewish spiritual director Linda Greene

Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.
Zoom room opens at 8:15 a.m. for optional check-in. Blessing and intention setting at 8:30–8:35 a.m. Meditate 8:35-9:00 a.m. Start your day centered and connected.

Talmud Tuesdays with Rabbi Alter

Tuesdays at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.
Join Rabbi Alter to learn about the history of rabbinical literature and some tremendous texts from Talmud!

Meditation with Claire Weiner

Wednesdays at 5 p.m.
Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session.

Wednesday evening Torah study

Wednesdays at 7 p.m.
Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston.

Biblical Book Club with Cantor Hayut

Thursdays at 11 a.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.
CANCELLED Sunday, January 11
For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut.

Weekly Lunch and Learn

Fridays at noon
Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Sessions are open to the entire community. Feel free to bring your lunch.

Shabbat morning Torah study

Saturdays at 8:50 a.m.
Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston.

Saturday Shabbat service

Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Havdalah service with guest artist Aly Halpert

Saturday, January 16, at 7:00 pm

Havdalah from the Whinston home

Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.
Join Rabbi Whinston and his family for a short prayer marking the end of Shabbat.

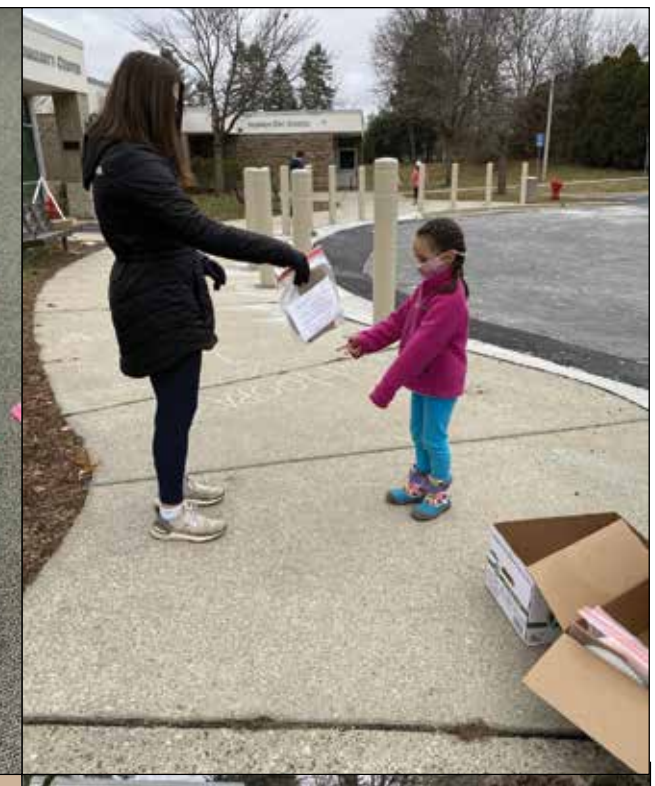
Kol HaLev rehearsal and meeting

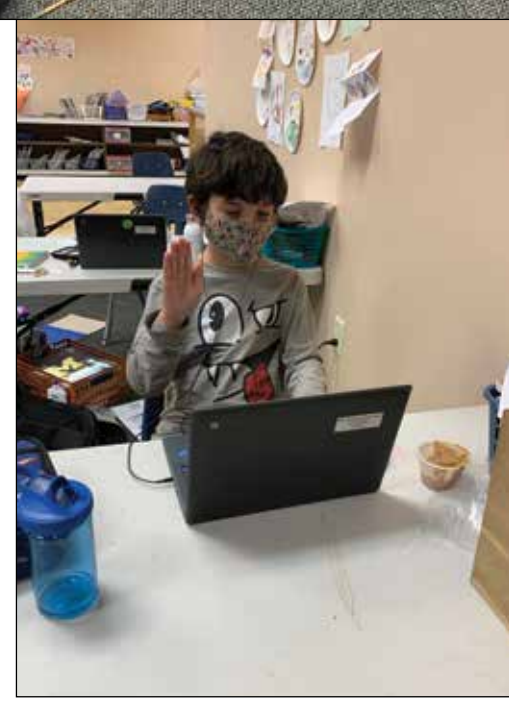
Sundays at 7 p.m.
CANCELLED Sunday, January 3rd
For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut. ■

Camp Connect meets critical need

Clara Silver, special to the WJN

When the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor renamed its youth multipurpose room, "The Ark," no one imagined it would become an actual ark of connection in a sea of isolation for six school-age children. When safety necessitated that Ann Arbor Public Schools move all grades online, the Ann Arbor JCC knew that some families would not be able to work and support their children's learning at home. The J designated the Ark for a new program named "Camp Connect," which is a full-day academic and social support program for elementary-age children.





Intentionally limited in enrollment, the program provides children with concentrated personal attention from Camp and Youth Program Coordinator and in-room supervisor, Marlowe Susselman. The day is 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., and the children spend this time together as a single pod. However, each child has a unique schedule due to school, grade, and teacher requirements. The pod also makes use of the Ann Arbor JCC's outdoor playground spaces, gym, games, art supplies, and building Wi-Fi, as well as being provided with snacks and the optional kosher hot lunch program.

Enrichment activities are an important part of the day, and students are able to engage in multiple extracurricular disciplines. Art projects range from watercolor painting to sculpting to crafting. Sports, while weather dependent, range from basketball to soccer to tennis. Games that encourage science, technology, engineering, and math skills include marble runs, Lego, Jenga, Lincoln Logs, dominoes, and more. Strategy and language games include chess (a pod favorite according to Susselman), Battleship, and Apples to Apples. In addition, children work with coding and sound mixing via software programs like ScratchJr, Tynker, and GarageBand.

Susselman keeps track of all six children's schedules to ensure that each child arrives on time to their online academic classes and completes assignments and independent work. In addition, she provides the much-needed child-adult social-emotional connection, as well as encouraging social-emotional development among the children. According to Susselmen, the group has developed strong bonds. "Although kids vary considerably in age, ranging from grades K through third, they consistently create new games with different roles to incorporate everyone. The older kids explore leadership roles by including ideas from the younger kids, and by offering to help them clean up or teach them something."

The pod has created a special form of communication. Susselman says, "One day I noticed one of the children putting something in a 'secret pocket' of my desk, which excited the other children. Since then, they leave me mail almost daily, and decided to make mailboxes for each other out of paper bags. Now they leave each other pictures or messages when on break while other students are in class." The most consistent challenge for Susselman is "getting out the door for pick-up on time, because children do not want to leave Camp Connect. Even when we were closed in November for a couple weeks, the Zoom check-ins planned for 30 minutes each lasted well over two hours because the kids wanted to keep talking, play games, and read more stories."

The Ark room is configured to comply with government health department COVID mitigation requirements. All the children's workspaces are six feet apart. Children have daily health checks and temperature screening, wear masks indoors, and frequently wash or sanitize hands. While the program takes all the necessary physical safety precautions, children are not immune to the fear and anxiety associated with the pandemic. Susselman says, "Through direct communication or behavior, I can see that children are feeling overwhelmed and absorbing the stress around them. The older kids can recognize and communicate their feelings, but the younger ones mostly reveal themselves through behaviors like increased acting out or demands for attention and comfort." While parents appreciate Camp Connect for providing a full day of academic support and activities, Susselman says, "The most crucial thing Camp Connect provides [the children] is a source of safety, normalcy, and friendship. They have the opportunity to be in a nurturing space where they can feel a sense of security and build social bonds with other children."

In addition to Camp Connect, Camp Raanana, already in the midst of early bird registration for the summer of 2021, is providing connection to the fun and friends of summer but in a socially distant way. Each winter, Camp Raanana hosts an open house where campers can reunite and enjoy the activities, songs, cheers, and more that they experience at camp. This year, Camp Raanana hosted a week of online events culminating in a drive-thru with take-home crafts, Camp Raanana chants, and all the fun of the in-person events. Using technology to keep everyone safe, a collaborative art project moved to the whiteboard tool from Zoom. Singing, challah decorating, and building igloos out of ice cubes are just a few of the online activities connecting kids with key components of their pre-pandemic lives. Director of Camp and Youth Nikki Feinberg says, "Our drive-thru event went so well! It was very special to see our camp families in person, running around, singing camp cheers, and getting excited for the summer. It helped make camp not seem so far away. With almost 50% of last summer's families already registered for next summer, staying connected is clearly important to our families."

Director of Child and Family Services Peretz Hirshbein explains, "The J's service to our community includes connecting children to experiences that enhance their growth and development on multiple levels. When the only way to stay healthy in a pandemic is not interacting in person, children have a very had time learning fundamental social skills. Ensuring children have opportunities for social development is one of our top priorities until it is safe to interact in person again."

For more information about Camp Raanana or Camp Connect, email Director of Camp and Youth Nikki Feinberg at nikkifeinberg@jccannarbor.org. ■

Beth Israel in January

Events and Classes

Tea and Torah study with Rabbi Caine
Thursdays, January 7, 14, 21, and 28, at 6:30 p.m.

Brew a cup of tea and join Rabbi Caine for Torah study. We'll delve into the depths of Torah, starting with Genesis (not the weekly parashah), as we bring our best selves and traditional perspectives to engage the text and apply it to our daily lives. A variety of teas will be sent on a monthly basis.

The Stories Behind the Stories of Genesis
Sundays, January 10, 17, 24, and 31, at 7 p.m.

Read the stories in Genesis of Noah, of Adam and Eve, and of Creation, as well as the Babylonian myth that lies behind each of them. We'll discuss how knowing the Babylonian background of the stories enriches our understanding of them when they are read each year. This eight-week course is taught by Liz Fried, PhD, and costs $115 for members and $135 for non-members. Register on the BIC website (bethisrael-aa.org).

Beginner Hebrew
Sundays, January 10, 17, 24, and 31, at 7 p.m.

This Hebrew class is for beginners. We will practice reading, writing, and speaking Hebrew together, all while keeping the topic relevant to current events, holidays, Israeli culture, and other interesting topics. This 12-week course is taught by Yael Ross and costs $180 for members and $200 for non-members. Register on the BIC website.

Biblical Hebrew
Sundays, Wednesday 6, 13, 20, and 27, at 7 p.m.

Biblical Hebrew is for students who can read Hebrew (level 2). Students will both read and discuss Biblical texts and study aspects of Biblical Hebrew grammar. This 12-week course is taught by Liz Fried, PhD, and costs $180 for members and $200 for non-members. Register on the BIC website.

Monthly Lego contest
Sunday, January 3, at 4 p.m.

In honor of the upcoming holiday of Tu B'Shvat, construct a dream treehouse or something that comes from a tree. Share your creation with the group, and win a prize if you are the group favorite! For children grades K–6. Register on the BIC website.

Tot Shabbat with the Caine family
Fridays, January 15 and 29, at 5:30 p.m.

Join Rav Nadav, Lynne, Merav, and Ziva for Kabbalat Tot Shabbat by Zoom! Bring in Shabbat with music, dancing, candle lighting, and kiddush. Invite your friends! If you are new to the program and have not received your special Tot Shabbat bag, contact Sam at szielinksi@bethisrael-aa.org.

Family game night
Sunday, January 10, at 5 p.m.

Get supplies delivered, learn new games, and have some fun! We'll start with ice breakers, test our knowledge with trivia, then learn a new game to play with your family. For families with children in grades K – 5. Register on the BIC website.

Mystery reader
Sunday, January 24, at 11 a.m.

Join us for stories read by a special mystery reader! Who will it be this month? For children ages five and under.

Theology Book Club
Wednesdays at 8 p.m.

BIC's Theology Book Club welcomes you to join them to read together and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. The books are in English. Contact Paul Shifrin at 248-514-7276 for more information.

Talmud study with Rabbi Dobrusin
Mondays, January 4, 11, 18, and 25, at 3:30 p.m.

Rabbi Dobrusin will be facilitating a Talmud class online on Monday afternoons from 3:30–4:30 p.m. While we will read the Hebrew/Aramaic text, translations are available, and all discussions will be in English. All are welcome to join regardless of the level of your familiarity with Hebrew.

Pirkei Avot: Teachings of the Sages
Thursdays, January 7, 14, 21, and 28, at 5 p.m.

Rabbi Dobrusin will facilitate Zoom discussions on the classic rabbinic text Pirkei Avot. While the title is usually translated as "Teachings of the Sages," a more interesting translation is "Chapters of Fundamental Principles." Pirkei Avot consists of short rabbinic statements concerning ethics, faith, and interpersonal relationships. Reading Pirkei Avot helps us focus on the values and principles that guide our lives. We will study the text in English, referring occasionally to the Hebrew. The text can be found in the Shabbat morning *Sim Shalom* siddur. Check the online calendar for specific dates.

Online Services
Everyone is welcome to join Beth Israel for services, classes, and events, all virtual. Below is a list of the links to participate in services at Beth Israel. Beth Israel is now livestreaming services on the Beth Israel YouTube channel (Beth Israel Congregation AA MI). All links will also be available on the Beth Israel homepage (bethisrael-aa.org). Please note that passwords are used. Contact the office to get the passwords at office@bethisrael-aa.org.

Evening minyan
Sundays at 5:00 p.m.
Monday – Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Friday evening services
Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6:00 p.m.

Shabbat morning services
Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. ■

Yiddish in Midwestern Jewish culture

Kelsey Robinette Keeves, special to the WJN

This February 4 and 5, a Mellon Sawyer Seminar convened by Professor Maya Barzilai brings together a group of Midwest-based scholars to discuss Jewish thought and writing about the Midwest and its cities, including Detroit, Chicago, and Milwaukee. The event, Jewish Multilingualism in the Midwest: Yiddish Translations of Urban Experience, will be held virtually. It dovetails with the Frankel Institute 2020-2021 theme, Translating Jewish Cultures,

led by co-head fellows Maya Barzilai and Adriana X. Jacobs. Participants will explore Yiddish writings about urban experiences, discussing the role of translation and multilingualism in Midwestern Jewish culture.

"For the first time, we will discuss the Midwest as an interconnected region of Jewish creativity and production, rather than focusing on isolated cities and sites within the Midwest," says Barzilai. "Reading texts about city life, stockyards, factory work, and the auto industry, participants consider what connects the Midwest as a region through a Jewish lens." Through this event, Barzilai also intends to create an archive of Yiddish publications in and about the Midwest.

The symposium is part of a series of collaborative seminars funded by a $225,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, meant to explore how the Midwest was shaped by successive waves of both international and domestic migrations. The foundation aims to create short-term research centers that allow intensive study of subjects that may be otherwise difficult to pursue. Led by Yopie Prins and Silke-Maria Weineck, a group of translation studies scholars in the University of Michigan's Department of Comparative Literature received this grant to study the Midwest as a multilingual site of translation. The various seminars explore diverse cultures of translation across different sites in the Midwest, including languages such as Polish, German, Yiddish, Filipino, Turkish, and Arabic.

Visiting participants in the February seminar include actor and playwright Mikhl Yashinsky, University of Chicago faculty Anna Elena Torres and Jessica Kurzane, and Sunny Yudkoff and Erin Faigin of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. U-M professors Julian Levinson and Mikhail Krutikov will also contribute to the seminar.

"I invited scholars of Yiddish literature who have an interest in the Midwestern Jewish experience or in Midwestern Jewish authors. Jessica Kirzane, for example, has translated Yiddish women who write about life in Chicago. Other scholars explore the history of Jewish publication in the Midwest, Yiddish poetry about the Midwest, and bilingual, Yiddish-English writing about urban environments," says Barzilai. Actor Yashinsky will perform poetic and dramatic works by Midwestern Yiddish writers, alongside translations into English.

Translation practices play an important role in the seminar. "While Jews lived in a predominantly English-speaking Midwestern environment, they continued to write and publish in Yiddish throughout the early 20th century. They also translated their own works into English or wrote in multiple languages," says Barzilai. "When composing works about the Midwest, Jews needed to literally translate their experiences into another language, while also providing cultural translations and interpretations for American phenomena. Many of the texts we will discuss are critical of urban society and worker exploitation, and they also contend with early 20th-century antisemitism."

The event schedule will be available at the Frankel Center website's event page. ■

Pardes Hannah Events in January

Please join us for these or any of our ongoing services, rituals, circles, and teachings by checking the Pardes Hannah website for Zoom links (and any changes) at pardeshannah.org, or call Renee Robbins at 734-904-5459.

Twenty-five Minute Mindfulness with Linda Greene, Jewish spiritual director, co-sponsored by Temple Beth Emeth
Weekly on Tuesday at 8:30 a.m.

Chant Circle
Sunday, January 10, at 11 a.m.

Rosh Chodesh Shevat online minyan
Thursday, January 14, at 9 a.m.

Rosh Chodesh Shevat online minyan
Thursday, January 14, at 9 a.m.

Rosh Chodesh Shevat circle
Tuesday, January 12, at 7 p.m.

Zohar study and practice
Sunday, January 17, at 11 a.m.

Spiritual and Energetic Practices for a Healthy New Year
Sundays, January 17 and 24, at 4:00 p.m.

Kiddush Levanah
Saturday, January 23, at 6:45 p.m.

From Age-ing to Sage-ing: A Revolutionary Approach to Growing Older
Tuesdays, January 26 and March 2, at 4:30-6:30 p.m.
Six weekly two-hour online sessions
Registration: yerusha.org/sage-ing/sage-ing-program-registration

Tu Bishvat
Wednesday, January 27, at 7:30 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Service
Saturday, January 30, at 10:00 a.m. ■

Lost and gained in translation: Languages and cultures in the Jewish world

Emily Eisbruch, special to the WJN

What gets lost in translation and what is gained? How is translation handled in the Jewish world, given our numerous languages and cultures? These issues are explored through webinars offered by the University of Michigan Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies in the Translating Jewish Cultures series. The webinars are now available on the Frankel Center website, with more events planned for 2021. Watching these programs, I gained new appreciation for the practical, theoretical, and creative aspects of translation, as well as its vital place in the Jewish world.

One particularly intriguing recent webinar featured the Israeli poet Vaan Nguyen and her Hebrew to English translator, Adriana X. Jacobs. Nguyen was born in Israel in 1982, daughter of refugees who escaped Vietnam after the war and were granted citizenship by Israel.

Nguyen grew up with her parents and four sisters in Jaffa. She became a Hebrew blogger and poet, authoring the poetry collection The Truffle Eye first as a chapbook in 2008 and then as a book in 2013. Adriana X. Jacobs, associate professor of modern Hebrew literature at the University of Oxford and a Frankel Center Fellow, has translated Nguyen's The Truffle Eye into English, with publication expected in early 2021 by Zephyr Press.

To learn more of Nguyen's story, I highly recommend the 2005 film The Journey of Vaan Nguyen by filmmaker Duki Dror, available on Amazon Prime. The film follows Nguyen's trip with her father back to Bong Son in central Vietnam, where they hope to reclaim the family's land and property.

Kicking off the webinar, Nguyen recited several of her poems in Hebrew, and Jacobs read the English translations. Nguyen's poems are bold and innovative, featuring vivid imagery and creative juxtapositions, sometimes using a collage style. Discussion following the poetry reading explored the translation process, including outside sources Jacobs found helpful and how the two women collaborated. One inspiration Jacobs mentioned was a music video, "Mary Ocher — Metropolitan Chapters (live at Alexanderplatz)" with lyrics from a Vaan Nguyen poem. Available on YouTube, this video was filmed outdoors in Berlin with a group of punk-looking youth, reflecting an ever-widening circle of influences.

Nguyen's poems occasionally use Hebrew prepositions in a creative and unconventional way, not the simplest thing for a translator. There's also the crucial challenge of translating culturally specific terms. For example, Jacobs described her deliberation on translation of "Yad Vashem" in the third line of the poem "Highway 1," shown below. Yad Vashem is the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, though both yad and shem have several meanings in Hebrew. Jacobs chose to translate Yad Vashem as "a place and a name," in italics. Her explanatory note at the end of the book reads, "The line 'a place and a name' comes from Isaiah 56:5. I have used the King James translation, but Robert Alter renders this as 'a marker and a name.' The Hebrew, 'yad vashem,' is also the name given to the Holocaust museum in Jerusalem. Although 'yad' is more commonly associated with 'hand,' in Hebrew it also refers to a monument or memorial, as well as to the pointer used for reading the Torah scroll."

We also learned that the Highway 1 in the poem refers to Highway 1 in Vietnam, a "highway of death" during the Vietnam War, though Jacobs first thought of the Highway 1 along the East Coast of the United States and Israeli readers may first think of the Highway 1 running from Tel Aviv through Jerusalem. The evocation of these different, specific Highway 1s is part of the beauty and magic of this poem.

The Vaan Nguyen webinar is part of the Frankel Institute series Stranger Still: Translating Contemporary Poetry from Israel/Palestine. The next program in this series will feature the poets and translators Sabine Huynh (French, English, Hebrew) and Karen Alkalay-Gut (English, Hebrew, Yiddish) on Tuesday, February 16, 2021, at noon.

To get notified of upcoming Frankel Institute events, subscribe to their email newsletter on the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies website at lsa.umich.edu/judaic.

The Translating Jewish Cultures webinars are available from the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies website under the resources tab. This includes the Vaan Nguyen/Adriana X. Jacobs program, a webinar with Russian-born Israeli poet Rita Kogan and her Hebrew-to-English translators Alex Moshin and Zackary Sholem Berger, a webinar with Chana Kronfeld of UC Berkeley featuring insights on translating Yehuda Amichai's poetry, and a program titled Translating the Sacred Word with Aviya Kushner, author and language columnist at The Forward.

The poem "Highway 1," is from The Truffle Eye, by Vaan Nguyen, translated by Adriana X. Jacobs, forthcoming 2021. Used with permission of Zephyr Press. Original Hebrew published by Ma'ayan Press (2013). ■

Vaan Nguyen
Translated by Adriana X. Jacobs

Highway 1

On Highway 1,
America's fixed on a gun —
The hilltop greening
a place and a name.

Gathering worms
to stitch an ancestry for you
and a tradition.
On the streets
where I wander
I am waiting for the absurd.
On the way I'll grow —
On the way I'll wither —
Twigs crowning my head.

כביש מספר 1

בְּכַבִּישׁ מִסְפָּר אַחַת, אֲמֶרִיקָה נְצֻבָת עַל קַת
פִּסְגַּת הָהָר מוֹרִיקָה
יָד וָשֵׁם.

אוֹסֶפֶת תּוֹלָעִים
לִתְפֹּר עֲבוּרְךָ שׁוֹשֶׁלֶת
וּמָסֹרֶת.
הֵיכָן שֶׁאֲנִי מְשׁוֹטֶטֶת
בָּרְחוֹבוֹת
מְחַכָּה לָאַבְסוּרְד.
בַּדֶּרֶךְ אֶצְמַח
בַּדֶּרֶךְ אֶקְמֹל.
זַר זְרָדִים מֵעַל הָרֹאשׁ.

Tel Aviv University preserves knowledge of Ethiopian Jewish bible

Cnaan Liphshiz, originally written for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Tel Aviv University announced the launch of what it says is the world's first academic program focused on the holy scriptures of Ethiopian Jews.

The program, aimed currently at graduate students, was announced last week by the university's Chaim Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies and Archaeology. It is is titled Orit Apprehenders, which refers to one of the central pieces of scripture in the Ethiopian Jewish community.

In a statement, Dalit Rom-Shiloni, the TAU professor who is leading the new program, called it a "rescue operation" to preserve understanding about the Orit.

The Orit is the Ethiopian variant of the Hebrew Bible, Rom-Shiloni said. Prior to the compilation of the text known today as the Hebrew Bible, Jewish communities had similar "but certainly not identical" versions, she added.

Ethiopian Jews brought the Orit with them when they immigrated to Israel beginning in the 1980s. The text is written in Ge'ez, a Semitic language used by clergy in Ethiopia. Around the Orit, an unwritten liturgy evolved over the centuries that includes songs, rabbinical interpretations and stories in Amharic and Tigrinya.

The new study program aims to preserve and teach that liturgy, which is fading as Ethiopian Jews integrate into Israeli society.

"These cultural treasures are facing extinction," Rom-Shiloni said. ■

'Homeland' creators are adapting Nathan Englander's 'Dinner at the Center of the Earth' into a TV series

Curt Schleier, originally for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Showtime hopes it has found its next "Homeland" in the form of a Nathan Englander adaptation.

The network has "Homeland" co-creators Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa producing Englander's 2017 novel "Dinner at the Center of the Earth" into a series, Deadline reports.

The book centers on a Prisoner Z who is being held at a secret prison site in Israel's Negev Desert. He's an Israeli spy who betrayed his native country to atone for actions that led to the death of innocent individuals — and perhaps break the cycle of violence in the region.

Gordon and Gansa have worked together on numerous shows, including "24," and converted the hit Israeli series "Prisoners of War" into "Homeland" for American audiences. That show earned the pair two Emmys, including for best drama series.

Englander, who grew up Orthodox and usually writes on Jewish themes (he told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency last year that everything down to "the weather" in his books is Jewish), has published five acclaimed books. His latest, "Kaddish.com," involves a haredi Orthodox man who leaves his religious community and then returns to it. ■

Nourishing our local life with food and flowers,

Continued from page 1

by Jewish halacha, for the sake of the poor. Farming has definitely connected me in new ways to our text, and has brought to life ideas such as Shabbat, shmita, and Jubilee.

Emily: Tell us more about shmita and Jubilee.

Carole: The work of farming can be all consuming, with daily lists of things to do greater than the day is long. It makes planning for rest essential, and Shabbat offers that. Shmita and Yovel (Jubilee) are similarly directed times for rest in seven- and 50-year cycles. More can be found at hazon.org/shmita-project/overview and myjewishlearning.com/article/what-is-shemita-the-sabbatical-year.

Emily: What other elements, traditions, and holidays in Judaism inspire you and relate to farming?

Carole: As you might imagine, it is particularly special to celebrate Sukkot on the farm as it is such an abundant time of the year. I am excited to plan for the next shmita year (beginning Fall 2021) and look forward to having the farm host events with the Jewish Alliance for Food, Land, and Justice, a volunteer organization that was started during the last shmita cycle to educate and advocate on issues such as local food systems, food access, and climate change. Anyone interested in helping with this endeavor should feel free to contact me — volunteers are both needed and welcome!

Emily: Tell us about your experiences in the Jewish Community of Ann Arbor and the connections between your farm and Washtenaw County Jewish community.

Carole: A long-time Reconstructionist, I have been a member of the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation since moving to the area, and I so enjoy having the schoolchildren and their families out to the farm! It is never too early to educate the next generation about sustainable farming, to have them see where food actually comes from, and to have them connect to the out-of-doors.

Emily: How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your operations?

Carole: Due to COVID, I was unable to sell plant starts and cut flowers last Spring and have had to cancel all rentals of the small farm event space. I have missed sharing this special place with others! The pandemic did, however, encourage me to set up an online sales platform for the first time, allowing me to offer customers online ordering and payments, as well as no-contact pickup. It was wonderful to meet people that had been buying my produce and flowers for years at Argus Farm Stop, and I will absolutely continue with this platform moving forward. Know your farmer, know your food!

Emily: Where can people learn more about your farm and purchase your products?

Carole: My website, thefarmonjennings.com, and my Instagram and Facebook pages offer information about the farm and provide the opportunity to join my mailing list, with periodic updates describe products and availability. Products can be purchased online and picked up at the farm or can be found at Argus Farm Stop. (Post-Covid I will return to a farmers' market or two — stay tuned!) ■

WE ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TBE'S LEGACY SOCIETY TO HONOR THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE MADE A COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINING OUR FUTURE.

As of December 18, 2020

Foundation Stones
אבני יסוד

Anonymous | Jack Billi and Sheryl Hirsch
Ronald and Stephanie Chervin | Alan and Bette Cotzin
Susan R. Fisher | Judith and Paul Freedman | Nanette Gill
David Lockett Gitterman and Susan Lockett Gitterman
Bobbi and David Heilveil | Ralph Katz and Deborah Scott Katz
Marc L. Kessler | Ted and Wendy Lawrence | Judie and Jerry Lax
Donald and Julia Levitt | Arthur and Karen Lindenberg
Robin and Rod Little | Marty and Kathy Ludington
Betsy Yvonne Mark | Ed Stein and Pat McCune
Robin and Joe Pollak | Steve and Kathy Rhodes | Ronnie L. Shapiro
Rhonda and Stuart Simon | Rabbi Josh and Sarah Whinston

If you have already included a gift to TBE in your will, trust, retirement account, or life insurance policy, please let us know so that we can welcome you into our legacy society.

Temple Beth Emeth

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LIFE & LEGACY
Assuring JEWISH TOMORROWS

High-school student leads effort to preserve Vermont's oldest Jewish cemetery

David LaChance, originally written for the Bennington Banner and Jewish Telegraphic Agency

The autumn leaves crunched underfoot as Netanel Crispe walked uphill toward the northwest corner of the small cemetery. He stopped and examined a toppled headstone.

"The last time I was here this was standing up," he said, regarding the weathered, gray stone. "At least it hasn't broken."

Crispe brushed away the leaves to reveal a carving at the top of the stone: two raised hands, the gesture used in the delivery of the Birkat Kohanim, Judaism's priestly blessing.

This is the grave of Marcus Cane, who died on Nov. 13, 1874, and the raised hands are an indication that he was a kohen, a descendant of the sons of Aaron who served as priests in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Cane was a pioneer, one of the first German Jews who made his way to settle in the Slate Valley along the New York-Vermont border in 1868. These families established Vermont's first Jewish community here in Poultney and left behind this largely forgotten place, the oldest Jewish cemetery in Vermont.

Before this summer Crispe, 18, a senior at Burr and Burton Academy in Manchester, was unaware that the cemetery existed. Now he's leading an effort to restore and preserve the site.

"I decided it's my responsibility to honor these pioneers and preserve their history because it's vital to the history of our state," Crispe said.

Crispe first learned of the cemetery while doing some metal detecting in town on behalf of a historical society.

"I came across a house that I was told was a synagogue," he said. The family who owned the house "mentioned that there was a Jewish cemetery in town, and I was blown away because I had no idea."

As both a 10th-generation Vermonter and an Orthodox Jew, Crispe is keenly interested in the history of Jewish life in the Green Mountain State.

"There are not many Jews in the area, so every time I meet one, it's amazing," he said.

The homeowner gave Crispe directions to the cemetery, but even so it was difficult to find.

"This was all grown up," he said, waving his hand toward the entrance, "and I couldn't even see the gate. But I finally found it on my third attempt."

Expecting that it might be a marked-off corner of a larger burial ground, as is the case for many other Jewish cemeteries in Vermont, Crispe was "shocked" to find that it was a full, half-acre cemetery.

"And then I was really just disappointed to see how so many of the older stones are fallen down, broken, although many of them are in good shape," he said.

The cemetery contains some 60 to 85 graves – there are no conclusive records. Most of the graves date from the 19th and 20th centuries. A handful, parts of family plots that date back decades, are more recent. Cane was the first person buried here, and his wife, Elisa, was the third.

Who were these settlers, and where have their descendants gone?

"Those were the two big questions that I was asking myself as well," Crispe said.

His research led him to "'Members of this Book': The Pinkas of Vermont's First Jewish Congregation" by Robert S. Schine, a professor of Jewish studies at Middlebury College. A pinkas is a notebook, a record of events kept by a Jewish community, and Poultney's pinkas had somehow survived, discovered in a used bookstore in Denver in 1966.

Schine writes that he had written to the American Jewish Archives at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati looking for any information about the Jews of the Slate Valley. The one item in the collection was the pinkas, written between 1867 and 1874 in German, with Hebrew and English bits intertwined.

Through the pinkas, Crispe learned that Poultney's Jews had arrived from Germany around the time of the Civil War, drawn to the area's booming slate industry. Predominantly peddlers in Europe, these new Americans became the shopkeepers, tailors and grocers for Poultney and Fair Haven, as well as Granville, New York, and environs.

"They were peddlers traveling around just with whatever they had on their back and their small skills, finding jobs here and there, but when they came to America, this was like a new life for them," Crispe said. "They established and basically became a strong Jewish community here."

The center of the new community was Poultney, where an upstairs room in the house owned by Isaac Cane, one of Marcus's sons, was used for services. The congregation purchased a Torah, and later a second, from New York, and bought a half-acre of land from the Union Church to serve as its cemetery.

The history of the Jews of Poultney mirrors that of the slate industry itself, which went through booms and busts before collapsing during the Great Depression in the 1930s. By the 1890s, the Jewish community had disbanded. Some went to Rutland, others to New York, and still others to Ohio and the Midwest.

Crispe has been unable to find any further traces of the founders of the Poultney Jewish community. However, he has made contact with 15 to 20 members of families who came later.

"They're just so happy to see that something's being done and that their family hasn't been forgotten in this way," he said. "It's been incredible hearing their stories, seeing the pictures they've been able to send me and placing a face on the stones, really being able to connect with these people."

There are unanswered questions, among them the disappearance of both Torahs. Crispe said it's possible that one was taken by a member of the congregation when he moved away, and that the second might have gone to a congregation in Rutland. The deed for the cemetery has long gone missing – "no one has the slightest clue where it might be, or if it still even exists," he said – and so the town has taken responsibility for the site.

Crispe has a threefold plan: Restore and preserve the cemetery and all of its stones; create a fund to ensure that it can be maintained in perpetuity; and obtain official recognition of the cemetery's historical status.

"I'm applying for a state historic marker to be placed here, and I want to get a nice gate – if we can raise the funds – that says Poultney Hebrew Cemetery, which is what it's referred to," he said.

"I've been connected with different historical societies, museums, the town of course, and different Jewish communities around the state. It's a collective effort."

Netanel Crispe works on a headstone at the oldest Jewish cemetery in Vermont. CAPTION : DAVID LACHANCE/BENNINGTON BANNER

Crispe has established a GoFundMe account – Save Vermont's Oldest Jewish Cemetery – which had raised nearly $7,000 by early December.

Ideally he would like to add to the cemetery a genizah, a place for the proper disposal of worn-out or damaged Jewish religious items.

"I've contacted different rabbis in the state and most synagogues don't actually have one," he said. "They would love to have something like that available."

"Really the main goal of the project is to reunite the Jewish communities of Vermont, bring together the Jewish life with the secular life and the communities of Poultney and the surrounding areas, and really just bring people together with a great kind of goal and mission in these troubling times."

Crispe has dedicated himself to helping to preserve the state's historic places. They're not as secure as some Vermonters may think, he warns.

"Although we have so many historic buildings, and you see history everywhere around us … we're losing it every year because there's no laws preventing it," he said. "If we lose our history, we lose our identity." ■

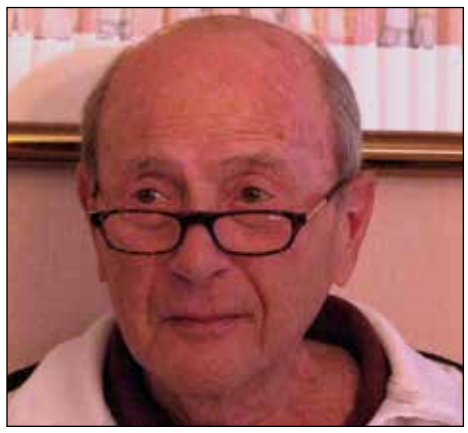
Obituaries

Theodore Mann, 92, former chairman of Presidents Conference and early critic of Israeli occupation

Ben Harris, originally for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Theodore Mann, a Philadelphia lawyer who led several major Jewish organizations and was an early critic of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, died of the coronavirus.

Mann died Dec. 12 in Philadelphia, the The Washington Post reported. A daughter



told the paper that the cause was COVID-19. Mann was 92.

Mann was president of the American Jewish Congress in 1987 when the group adopted an unprecedented statement warning that Israel's failure to divest itself of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip would eventually force it to choose between being a Jewish state and a democracy.

As chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, he flew with then-Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to Egypt to celebrate the signing of a peace treaty with the country, later falling asleep during a belly dance show.

Mann also was the founding chairman of Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger.

"Ted's entire life represented exactly the voice of moral principle, a fierce commitment to pluralism, and dedication to human rights that is so vitally needed today," Rabbi David Saperstein, the emeritus director of the Reform movement's Religious Action Center, told the Post.

Born in Czechoslovakia in 1928, Mann came to the United States as a baby. He served in the Army and later earned a law degree from Temple University. He went on to argue several religious freedom cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. ■

Holocaust Memorial Center receives grant for teacher trainings

Special to the WJN

The Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus has received a $45,000 grant from the Donald R. and Esther Simon Foundation. The grant will support the creation of virtual Holocaust education workshops for Michigan teachers.

"We are honored to receive this generous grant from the Donald R. and Esther Simon Foundation," says Holocaust Memorial Center CEO Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld. "This grant will enable us to build upon our teacher trainings by providing virtual workshops to educators throughout the state. We greatly appreciate the Foundation's support of our mission to engage, educate, and empower by teaching the lessons of the Holocaust."

The Holocaust Memorial Center Education Department will use the grant funding to develop three Holocaust education teacher trainings in special topics related to the Holocaust. The trainings will be offered virtually to assist teachers this school year and into the summer. The HMC Education Department will work with school districts to engage teachers to participate in the sessions. They will also develop and provide customized follow-up content and support to the teachers based on each district's curricular needs.

Holocaust Memorial Center director of education Ruth Bergman oversees the Education Department, including its existing teacher training program, which provides teachers the resources and training to teach students about genocides including the Holocaust. The Holocaust Memorial Center has hosted teacher trainings at the museum and also traveled to teachers throughout the state, from Muskegon to Marquette to Monroe. Since the first training in April 2018 in Traverse City, HMC has trained more than 1,100 teachers from more than 450 Michigan schools.

The Donald R. and Esther Simon Foundation was founded by Mr. and Mrs. Simon in 2005. With recognition of the family's original roots in Michigan, the Simon Foundation supports projects that address Jewish life and identity, cancer research and support services, the cultural arts, and social justice issues that make a positive impact in the lives of this generation and the next.

For additional information, visit holocaustcenter.org or call 248-553-2400. ■

Maria Piechotka, architect who was an influential expert on Poland's synagogues, dies at 100

Penny Schwartz, originally for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Polish architects Maria Piechotka and her late husband recognized the significance of the wooden synagogues from the 17th and 18th century as unique to their country — the architecture and the richly colored murals.

"It was as if local Jews found the solution to the prohibition in the second commandment," Piechotka once said, noting the commandment about graven images, in an interview for a documentary.

Piechotka and husband Kazimierz, who were not Jewish, recovered and advanced the knowledge about those centuries-old synagogues. Almost none survived the Holocaust. They also fought in the resistance during World War II.

Piechotka died Saturday in Warsaw. She was 100.

"The Jewish heritage world has lost a giant," Ruth Ellen Gruber wrote in a remembrance on Jewish Heritage Europe, noting that she was among those who were mentored by the couple.

As architecture students following World War II, the Piechotkas carried on the studies and documentation of synagogue architecture launched earlier by their Jewish colleagues at the Warsaw Institute of Technology, including Oskar Sosnowski and his protege, Szymon Zajczyk. Both had perished in the Holocaust.

The Piechotkas' influential books include "Wooden Synagogues," first published in Polish in 1957 and two years later in English, and "Heaven's Gates: Wooden Synagogues in the Territories of the Former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth," published in 2004.

A legacy of Piechotka's pioneering work is a stunning hand-built, nearly full scale recreation of the Gwozdziec Synagogue's timber roof, its gloriously painted cupola and a hand-carved wooden bima that are the centerpiece of the core exhibit at the Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

"We knew that if we didn't capture this at this given instant, if, God forbid, these materials would be damaged, then a huge piece of culture, European culture, world culture, would be completely forgotten," Piechotka said in "Raise the Roof," an award-winning documentary that traces the making of the exhibit created by Rick and Laura Brown of the Handshouse Studio in Massachusetts.

She said the Jewish artists who painted the interior, and signed their work, created a visual language of symbolic imagery.

"And this was the absolute uniqueness of these synagogues built here," Piechotka said.

In 2016, Piechotka was awarded the Irena Sendler Memorial Award from Taube Philanthropies.

"Poles and Jews inside and outside of Poland are deeply indebted to the Piechotkas for their historic contributions to the recovery, preservation and memory of Jewish heritage in Poland," the foundation's executive director, Shana Penn, said at the ceremony held at the Polin Museum. ■

Simchas and Sorrows

Mazel Tov to:

Phil and Julie Barr on the birth of their granddaughter, Sylvia Phillip Barr, born November 11, 2020 to parents, David Barr and Melissa Miller of Boise, Idaho

Condolences to:

The family of Eleanor Feldbaum, mother of Merle Feldbaum (Julio Borquez), grandmother of Leah Borquez, October 20, 2020.

The family of Isaac Wierba, father of Liz Wierba (David Schmidt), grandfather of Max and Jonah Schmidt, November, 21, 2020

Mark Schneyer and his family on the death of his brother, Alan Schneyer, November 18.

The friends and family of Renee Saper, November 22, 2020.

The family of Jim Keen Sr., father of Jim Keen Jr. (Bonnie Keen), grandfather of Gabbi and Molly Keen, November 24, 2020.

Marcie Greenfield on the death of her mother, Gloria Greenfield, November 24.

The family of Seymour (Sy) Marvin Rosenwasser, father of Mark (Leslie) Rosenwasser, grandfather of Adam Rosenwasser (Shalom Rosenberg), and Bradley Rosenwasser (Rebecca Grekin). Great-grandfather of Eve, Eliza, Simon and Sophie, November 26, 2020.

Sharon Goldberg and family on the death of Sharon's father, Harvey Danowitz, December 18.

To David Pinsky and Debra Pinals on the death of their father, Dr. Stanley Theodore (Ted) Pinsky, December 20.

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Holly Huffnagle

U.S. Director for Combating Antisemitism for the American Jewish Committee

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Nearly half of American adults do not know what the term antisemitism means—or say they have never heard the word. How do we push back against antisemitism and other forms of hate and intolerance when the broader society is ignorant? Why is combating antisemitism also a problem for non-Jews? And how do we work together to lower levels of antisemitism in America?

Holly Huffnagle spearheads the American Jewish Committee's response to antisemitism in the United States. Before coming to the AJC, Ms. Huffnagle served as policy advisor to the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism at the U.S. Department of State and as a researcher in the Mandel Center of Advanced Holocaust Studies at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Most recently, she was Scholar-in-Residence at Oxford University with the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy.

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